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THE FIRST EDITION OF THE
CHRISTIAN YEAR,
1827.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

THE first edition of the "Christian Year" was published in the summer of 1827 in two small thin volumes, in what would now be considered an old-fashioned form: it is these two quaint-looking volumes which are here presented in *facsimile*, giving the exact form, text, and appearance which characterized the first issue. The publisher believes that there are very many who would be glad to possess an exact replica of this now classical book, which is so well known and highly valued by English-speaking people throughout the world.

Some of the pieces, in this their first form, present notable variations from the subsequent editions; as it will be interesting to those who know the "Christian Year" to see what changes Keble made in it as it went onward, a list of these alterations is given in the present reprint, with the page and line in which they occur.

THE FIRST EDITION

OF

KEBLE'S CHRISTIAN YEAR,

BEING

A FACSIMILE

OF

The Editio Princeps published in 1827.

WITH A PREFACE BY

THE BISHOP OF ROCHESTER,

AND A LIST OF ALTERATIONS MADE BY THE AUTHOR IN THE TEXT OF LATER EDITIONS.

LONDON:
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.
1897.

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PREFACE.

THE fancy to reproduce the exact form in which a favourite book first appeared cannot, perhaps, make any very weighty pleas in its defence. Yet in the case of such a book as the "Christian Year" it may be thought to have some justifying cause. It is not an altogether trivial pleasure and interest to the men of a later generation to hold in their hands, and look upon with their eyes, the very thing in the very shape which in their fathers' days wrought so deeply upon the life of many souls and of the Church at large. But there is also in this particular case a special consideration. There was a character not to be mistaken about the movement in the Church of England to which, as we now know, the Author of the "Christian Year" contributed more than any other single man. It was a character of sim-

plicity, of strong and austere reserve, of grave quietness: and the underlying secret of these qualities was that, in the truest sense and in a high degree, it was an unworldly character. There can hardly be a greater mistake than to suppose, if any do so, that the dominant motive of Tractarian times was keen interest in matters of archæological, or even of ecclesiastical, correctness. The movement was one of moral and spiritual intensity rarely equalled, perhaps never surpassed. And, because it ran so deep, it ran quietly. There was very little show about it. There was almost a contempt of elaboration in externals, as being too near akin to display.

Perhaps it is not too fanciful to see a reflection of this even in the minor accessories and products of the movement. The very form of its books was modest and unpretending; and this little volume, with its neat, clear and refined, but utterly undemonstrative, printing and shape, has, perhaps, in this connection a real interest which justifies its publication.

It may remind us of beginnings laid under cloudy skies, amidst dark forebodings, in profound humility, with the quiet courage of sure faith and unreserved devotion.

If it does so, it may do its little part to help a time like our own, gifted with its own excellences of restless energy and tolerant receptiveness, yet needing to remember the secrets of strength that belong to concentration and depth and quietness.

The great growth with which God has blessed our Church since the days when her most loyal son "walked round her towers in fear," and "told her jewels o'er with jealous eye," will ever be one of the witnesses—and to true children of the Church of England a witness specially dear—of what such strength may carry in its bosom.

EDW. ROFFEN.

Bishop's House,
Kennington, S.E.,
Eastertide, 1897.

EMENDATIONS

IN

LATER EDITIONS OF "THE CHRISTIAN YEAR."

VOL. I.

P. vi. line 13, *for* for many of them are
read being, in many parts,

vii. line 4, *for* volumes *read* pages

1, 6, dwell ;— swell ;—

7, 16, her him

10, 5, O set to prove
True confessors in faith, worst hypocrites in love,
read O doom'd to prove
The arrows wing'd in Heaven for Faith that will not love !

12, note e. *for* tenth *read* thirteenth

16, insert note on line 6, Ita fabulantur, ut qui sciant Dominum audire. *Tertull. Apolog.*, p. 36. edit. Rigalt.

18, note *for* Rhododendrons : *read* Oleanders :

19, line 12, *omit* again

22, 3, *for* Oft, as I gaze on landscape fair,
In thought I feel me poor and base ;
read Of the bright things in earth and air
How little can the heart embrace !

40, 2, *for* Cf. *read* Compare

43, 3, hopes hope

44, 2, Colossians Coloss.

P. 49, line 13, *for* Those *read* These
52, 1, Behold, And, lo,
55, 4, watch and pray wake or fast
65, note come enter
69, line 1, to that He would
74, 13, wandering erring
75, 15, wanderer Hermit
76, 7, Where now that statesman, cold and proud,
read Yes—mark him well, ye cold and proud,
80, 4, *for* Upon the softest bosom laid,
read Embosom'd in the greenest glade,
83, 2, *for* which *read* that
86, 1, and placed and He placed
89, note o, and he clothed them.
read and clothed them.
90, line 2, *for* Gen. *read* Genesis
102, note Cf. Compare
109, line 4, them, him,
113, 2, burned. burnt.
122, 6, He watches o'er thee
read O'er thee He watches
note, *for* Monday and Tuesday in Passion week: on which days
read In Passion week, from Tuesday evening to Thursday evening: during which time
141, 2, *for* Zech. xi. *read* Zechariah ix.
144, line 11, Turn ye Turn you
161, 5, arise rise
165, 2, when as soon as
176, note Exodus xxxii Exodus xxii.
84, line 5, appall, appal,

P. 185, line 12, *for* Convinc'd of sin, but not of grace;
It was a dreadful day.
read A day of wrath, and not of grace;
A dim and dreadful day.

189, 8, *for* his *read* her

190, 4, Lies Is

VOL. II.

20, 2, Sad night brings cheerless day.
read Sad dawn of cheerless day!

38, insert note on This were a Conqueror's grief.—Compare Herod. vii. 46.

40, line 7, *for* sprung *read* hid

41, 13, Heaven God

15, Then Full

17, Shall feel the o'erflowing whirlwinds sweep—
And will the blessed Angels weep?
read To utter death that hour shall sweep—
And will the Saints in Heaven dare weep?

49, note *for* Persees *read* Pens'es

54, line 10, while though

62, 3, *for* will answer him according, &c.
read will answer him that cometh according, &c.

66, note, *for* Revelations xiii. 14.
read Revelation xii. 14.

73, line 2, *for* has *read* hath

74, 3, Though Through

75, 1, Hear, O ye mountains,
read Hear ye, O mountains,

2, *for* Micah vi. 7. *read* Micah vi. 2.

6, thine Thy

P. 77, line 12, *for* centers *read* centres

80, 1,
Th' o'erwhelming future
read Th' appalling Future

83, after line 16, insert the following Stanza :—
It must be so : else wherefore falls
The Saviour's voice unheard,
While from His pard'ning Cross He calls
"O spare as I have spar'd ?"

85, line 4, *for* glows *read* peers

87, 9, groveling grovelling

13, sprung sprang

97, title,
Last Sunday after Trinity.
read Sunday next before Advent.

line 7, *for* tost, *read* toss'd,

14, mispent ! mis-spent !

103, 2,
Fancy with all her dreams must die,
read We shall live on, though Fancy die,

113, note *for* St. Matthew x. 44.
read St. Matthew x. 42.

115, line 2,
St. Matthew v. 3.
read St. Matthew v. 8.

119, 3, *for* until *read* unto

126, 2,
asunder the one, &c.
read asunder one, &c.

133, note, *for* Having land, he sold it,
read Having land, sold it,

136, line 1, *for* before the great and terrible day, &c.
read before the coming of the great and dreadful day, &c.

3, unto *read* to.

137, 14,
Didst warn us where the Christ should rise.
read Didst guide our hope, where Christ should rise.

note, *for* her *read* my

138, line 8, love lore

P. 140, line 1, *for* out, *read* forth,
note, St. John xxi. 15, 16, 17.
read St. John xxi. 15—17.

144, line 1, *for* indeed drink *read* drink indeed

150, note, They shall go They go

156, line 2, Heb. Hebrews

162, 19, Needs Need

166, insert note on—earnestly contend for the faith:—
ἐπαγωνίζεσθαι: "be very anxious for it as for a friend in jeopardy."

169, line 2, *for* Revelations *read* Revelation

173, note, God so loved the world,
read So God loved the world,

174, note, *for* all ye that travail,
read all that travail,

note, *for* This is a faithful saying
read This is a true saying

175, line 3, *for* down *read* fall'n

176, 4, Then And

186, 15, woodnotes woodnote

192, 4, St. Luke vii. 14, 15.
read St. Luke vii. 13, 14.

194, 19, *for* Then *read* Than

196, 14, What hope of joy, &c.
read What hope and joy, &c.

In the later Editions, pronouns, &c., having relation to the Almighty, are printed with a capital initial letter, and the word "even" is printed with an apostrophe ("e'en") when the rhythm requires that it should be read as one syllable. Variations of punctuation have not, for the most part, been noted.

THE

CHRISTIAN YEAR.

THE

CHRISTIAN YEAR:

THOUGHTS IN VERSE

FOR THE

SUNDAYS AND HOLYDAYS

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.
Isaiah xxx. 15.

VOL. I.

OXFORD,
PRINTED BY W. BAXTER,
FOR J. PARKER;
AND C. AND J. RIVINGTON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD,
AND WATERLOO PLACE, LONDON.
1827.

ADVERTISEMENT.

NEXT to a sound rule of faith, there is nothing of so much consequence as a sober standard of feeling in matters of practical religion: and it is the peculiar happiness of the Church of England to possess, in her authorized formularies, an ample and secure provision for both. But in times of much leisure and unbounded curiosity, when excitement of every kind is sought after with a morbid eagerness, this part of

the merit of our Liturgy is likely in some measure to be lost, on many even of its sincere admirers: the very tempers, which most require such discipline, setting themselves, in general, most decidedly against it.

The object of the present publication will be attained, if any person find assistance from it in bringing his own thoughts and feelings into more entire unison with those recommended and exemplified in the Prayer Book. The work does not furnish a complete series of compositions; for many of them are rather adapted with more or less propriety to the successive portions of the Liturgy, than originally suggested by them. Something has been added at the end concerning the several Occasional Services: which constitute, from their personal and

domestic nature, the most perfect instance of that *soothing* tendency in the Prayer Book, which it is the chief purpose of these volumes to exhibit.

May 30. 1827.

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	15.	note	xlv.		xv.
	18.	8.	whose		where
	54.	20.	the		thy
	75.	4.	sigh;		sigh.
	92.	12.	blaze.		blaze,
	114.	15.	sear		sere
	143.	18.	Thou		thou
	172.	5.	harm?		harm;
Vol. II.	p. 18.	line 6.	so that		and
	20.	15.	loadstar		lodestar
	43.	5.	Mark		St. Mark
	46.	5.	wordly		worldly
	50.	note	xl.		xi.
	72.	5.	as, in		as in
	73.	4.	torn		lorn
	119.	18.	yielded nothing		yielded, nothing
	193.	13.	The		For

I.

MORNING.

His compassions fail not; they are new every morning.
Lament. iii. 22, 23.

HUES of the rich unfolding morn,
That, ere the glorious sun be born,
By some soft touch invisible
Around his path are taught to dwell;—

Thou rustling breeze so fresh and gay,
That dancest forth at opening day,
And brushing by with joyous wing,
Wakenest each little leaf to sing;—

Ye fragrant clouds of dewy steam,
By which deep grove and tangled stream
Pay, for soft rains in season given,
Their tribute to the genial heaven;—

Why waste your treasures of delight
Upon our thankless, joyless sight;
Who day by day to sin awake,
Seldom of heaven and you partake?

Oh! timely happy, timely wise,
Hearts that with rising morn arise!
Eyes that the beam celestial view,
Which evermore makes all things new[a]!

New every morning is the love
Our wakening and uprising prove;
Through sleep and darkness safely brought,
Restored to life, and power, and thought.

New mercies, each returning day,
Hover around us while we pray;
New perils past, new sins forgiven,
New thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.

If on our daily course our mind
Be set to hallow all we find,
New treasures still, of countless price,
God will provide for sacrifice.

[a] Revelations xxi. 5.

Old friends, old scenes, will lovelier be,
As more of heaven in each we see:
Some softening gleam of love and prayer
Shall dawn on every cross and care.

As for some dear familiar strain
Untir'd we ask, and ask again,
Ever, in its melodious store,
Finding a spell unheard before;

Such is the bliss of souls serene,
When they have sworn, and stedfast mean,
Counting the cost, in all to' espy
Their God, in all themselves deny.

O could we learn that sacrifice,
What lights would all around us rise!
How would our hearts with wisdom talk
Along Life's dullest dreariest walk!

We need not bid, for cloister'd cell,
Our neighbour and our work farewell,
Nor strive to wind ourselves too high
For sinful man beneath the sky:

The trivial round, the common task,
Would furnish all we ought to ask;
Room to deny ourselves; a road
To bring us, daily, nearer God.

Seek we no more; content with these,
Let present Rapture, Comfort, Ease,
As Heaven shall bid them, come and go:—
The secret this of Rest below.

Only, O Lord, in thy dear love
Fit us for perfect Rest above;
And help us, this and every day,
To live more nearly as we pray.

II.

EVENING.

Abide with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent. *St. Luke* xxiv. 29.

'TIS gone, that bright and orbed blaze,
Fast fading from our wistful gaze;
Yon mantling cloud has hid from sight
The last faint pulse of quivering light.

In darkness and in weariness
The traveller on his way must press,
No gleam to watch on tree or tower,
Whiling away the lonesome hour.

Sun of my soul! Thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if Thou be near:
Oh may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide Thee from thy servant's eyes.

When round thy wondrous works below
My searching rapturous glance I throw,
Tracing out Wisdom, Power, and Love,
In earth or sky, in stream or grove;—

Or by the light thy words disclose
Watch Time's full river as it flows,
Scanning thy gracious Providence,
Where not too deep for mortal sense:—

When with dear friends sweet talk I hold,
And all the flowers of life unfold;—
Let not my heart within me burn,
Except in all I Thee discern.

When the soft dews of kindly sleep
My wearied eyelids gently steep,
Be my last thought, how sweet to rest
For ever on my Saviour's breast.

Abide with me from morn till eve,
For without Thee I cannot live:
Abide with me when night is nigh,
For without Thee I dare not die.

Thou Framer of the light and dark,
Steer through the t mpest thine own ark:
Amid the howling wintry sea
We are in port if we have Thee [b].

The Rulers of this Christian land,
'Twixt Thee and us ordained to stand,—
Guide Thou their course, O Lord, aright,
Let all do all as in thy sight.

Oh by thine own sad burthen, borne
So meekly up the hill of scorn,
Teach Thou thy Priests their daily cross
To bear as thine, nor count it loss!

If some poor wandering soul of thine
Have spurn'd, to-day, the voice divine,
Now, Lord, the gracious work begin;
Let her no more lie down in sin.

Watch by the sick: enrich the poor
With blessings from thy boundless store:

[b] Then they willingly received Him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went. *St. John* vi. 21.

Be every mourner's sleep to-night
Like infant's slumbers, pure and light.

Come near and bless us when we wake,
Ere through the world our way we take :
Till in the ocean of thy love
We lose ourselves in heaven above.

III.

ADVENT SUNDAY.

Now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. *Romans* xiii. 11.

AWAKE—again the Gospel-trump is blown—
From year to year it swells with louder tone,
From year to year the signs of wrath
Are gathering round the Judge's path,
Strange words fulfill'd, and mighty works achiev'd,
And truth in all the world both hated and believ'd

Awake! why linger in the gorgeous town,
Sworn liegemen of the Cross and thorny crown?
Up from your beds of sloth for shame,
Speed to the eastern mount like flame,
Nor wonder, should ye find your King in tears,
Even with the loud Hosanna ringing in his ears.

Alas! no need to rouse them: long ago
They are gone forth, to swell Messiah's show:
With glittering robes and garlands sweet
They strew the ground beneath his feet:
All but your hearts are there—O set to prove
True confessors in faith, worst hypocrites in love!

Meanwhile he paces through th' adoring crowd,
Calm as the march of some majestic cloud,
That o'er wild scenes of ocean-war
Holds its still course in heaven afar:
Even so, heart-searching Lord, as years roll on,
Thou keepest silent watch from thy triumphal throne.

Even so, the world is thronging round to gaze
On the dread vision of the latter days,
Constrain'd to own Thee, but in heart
Prepared to take Barabbas' part:
"Hosanna" now, to-morrow "Crucify,"
The changeful burden still of their rude lawless cry.

Yet in that throng of selfish hearts untrue
Thy sad eye rests upon thy faithful few,
Children and childlike souls are there,
Blind Bartimeus' humble prayer,

And Lazarus waken'd from his four days' sleep,
Enduring life again, that Passover to keep.

And fast beside the olive-border'd way
Stands the bless'd home, where Jesus deign'd to stay,
The peaceful home, to zeal sincere
And heavenly contemplation dear,
When Martha lov'd to wait with reverence meet,
And wiser Mary linger'd at thy sacred feet.

Still through decaying ages as they glide,
Thou lov'st thy chosen remnant to divide;
Sprinkled along the waste of years
Full many a soft green isle appears:
Pause where we may upon the desert road,
Some shelter is in sight, some sacred safe abode.

When withering blasts of error swept the sky [c],
And Love's last flower seem'd fain to droop and die,
How sweet, how lone the ray benign
On shelter'd nooks of Palestine!
Then to his early home did Love repair [d],
And cheer'd his sickening heart with his own native air.

[c] Arianism in the fourth century.
[d] See St. Jerome's Works, i. 123. edit. Erasm.

Years roll away: again the tide of crime
Has swept thy footsteps from the favour'd clime.
Where shall the holy Cross find rest?
On a crown'd monarch's [e] mailed breast:
Like some bright angel o'er the darkling scene,
Through court and camp he holds his heavenward course serene.

A fouler vision yet; an age of light,
Light without love, glares on the aching sight:
O who can tell how calm and sweet,
Meek Walton! shews thy green retreat,
When wearied with the tale thy times disclose,
The eye first finds thee out in thy secure repose?

Thus bad and good their several warnings give
Of His approach, whom none may see and live:
Faith's ear, with awful still delight,
Counts them like minute bells at night,
Keeping the heart awake till dawn of morn,
While to her funeral pile this aged world is borne.

[e] St. Louis in the tenth century.

But what are heaven's alarms to hearts that cower
In wilful slumber, deepening every hour,
That draw their curtains closer round,
The nearer swells the trumpet's sound?
Lord, ere our trembling lamps sink down and die,
Touch us with chastening hand, and make us feel
Thee nigh.

IV.

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.
St. Luke xxi. 28.

NOT till the freezing blast is still,
Till freely leaps the sparkling rill,
And gales sweep soft from summer skies,
As o'er a sleeping infant's eyes
A mother's kiss; ere calls like these,
No sunny gleam awakes the trees,
Nor dare the tender flowerets show
Their bosoms to th' uncertain glow.

Why then, in sad and wintry time,
Her heavens all dark with doubt and crime,
Why lifts the Church her drooping head,
As though her evil hour were fled?

Is she less wise than leaves of spring,
Or birds that cower with folded wing?
What sees she in this lowering sky
To tempt her meditative eye?

She has a charm, a word of fire,
A pledge of love that cannot tire;
By tempests, earthquakes, and by wars,
By rushing waves and falling stars,
By every sign her Lord foretold,
She sees the world is waxing old[f],
And through that last and direst storm
Descries by faith her Saviour's form.

Not surer does each tender gem,
Set in the figtree's polish'd stem,
Foreshew the summer season bland,
Than the e dread signs thy mighty hand:
But oh! frail hearts, and spirits dark!
The season's flight unwarn'd we mark,

[f] 2 Esdras xlv. 10. The world hath lost his youth, and the times begin to wax old.

But miss the Judge behind the door[g],
For all the light of sacred lore:

Yet is He there: beneath our eaves
Each sound his wakeful ear receives:
Hush, idle words, and thoughts of ill,
Your Lord is listening: peace, be still.
Christ watches by a Christian's hearth,
Be silent, "vain deluding mirth,"
Till in thine alter'd voice be known
Somewhat of Resignation's tone.

But chiefly ye should lift your gaze
Above the world's uncertain haze,
And look with calm unwavering eye
On the bright fields beyond the sky,
Ye, who your Lord's commission bear,
His way of mercy to prepare:
Angels He calls ye: be your strife
To lead on earth an Angel's life.

Think not of rest; though dreams be sweet,
Start up, and ply your heaven-ward feet.

[g] See St. James v. 9.

Is not God's oath upon your head,
Ne'er to sink back on slothful bed,
Never again your loins untie,
Nor let your torches waste and die,
Till, when the shadows thickest fall,
Ye hear your Master's midnight call?

V.

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

What went ye out into the wilderness to see? a reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? a prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. *St. Matt.* xi. 7, 8.

WHAT went ye out to see
O'er the rude sandy lea,
Whose stately Jordan flows by many a palm,
Or where Gennesaret's wave
Delights the flowers to lave,
That o'er her western slope breathe airs of balm?

All through the summer night
Those blossoms red and bright[g]
Spread their soft breasts, unheeding, to the breeze,
Like hermits watching still
Around the sacred hill,
Where erst our Saviour watch'd upon his knees.

[g] Rhododendrons: with which the western bank of the lake is said to be clothed down to the water's edge.

The Paschal moon above
Seems like a saint to rove,
Left shining in the world with Christ alone;
Below, the lake's still face
Sleeps sweetly in th' embrace
Of mountains terrass'd high with mossy stone.

Here may we sit, and dream
Over the heavenly theme,
Till to our soul the former days return;
Till on the grassy bed,
Where thousands once He fed,
The world's incarnate Maker we again discern.

O cross no more the main,
Wandering so wild and vain,
To count the reeds that tremble in the wind,
On listless dalliance bound,
Like children gazing round,
Who on God's works no seal of Godhead find:

Bask not in courtly bower,
Or sun-bright hall of power,
Pass Babel quick, and seek the holy land—

From robes of Tyrian die
Turn with undazzled eye
To Bethlehem's glade, or Carmel's haunted strand.

Or choose thee out a cell
In Kedron's storied dell,
Beside the springs of Love, that never die,
Among the olives kneel
The chill night-blast to feel,
And watch the Moon that saw thy Master's agony.

Then rise at dawn of day,
And wind thy thoughtful way,
Where rested once the Temple's stately shade,
With due feet tracing round
The city's northern bound,
To th' other holy garden, where the Lord was laid.

Who thus alternate see
His death and victory,
Rising and falling as on angel wings,
They, while they seem to roam,
Draw daily nearer home,
Their heart untravell'd still adores the King of kings.

Or, if at home they stay,
Yet are they, day by day,
In spirit journeying through the glorious land,
Not for light Fancy's reed,
Nor Honour's purple meed,
Nor gifted Prophet's lore, nor Science' wondrous wand.

But more than Prophet, more
Than Angels can adore
With face unveil'd, is He they go to seek:
Blessed be God, whose grace
Shews him in every place
To homeliest hearts of pilgrims pure and meek.

VI.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

The eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. *Isaiah* xxxii. 3.

OFT, as I gaze on landscape fair,
In thought I feel me poor and base;
Soft shades and gleaming lights are there—
I know it well, but cannot trace.

Mine eye unworthy seems to read
One page of Nature's beauteous book;
It lies before me, fair outspread—
I only cast a wishful look.

I cannot paint to Memory's eye
The scene, the glance, I dearest love—
Unchang'd themselves, in me they die,
Or faint, or false, their shadows prove.

In vain, with dull and tuneless ear,
I linger by soft Music's cell,
And in my heart of hearts would hear
What to her own she deigns to tell.

'Tis misty all, both sight and sound—
I only know 'tis fair and sweet—
'Tis wandering on enchanted ground
With dizzy brow and tottering feet.

But patience! there may come a time
When these dull ears shall scan aright
Strains, that outring Earth's drowsy chime,
As Heaven outshines the taper's light.

These eyes, that dazzled now and weak,
At glancing motes in sunshine wink,
Shall see the King's [1] full glory break,
Nor from the blissful vision shrink:

In fearless love and hope uncloy'd
For ever on that ocean bright

[1] Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off. *Isaiah* xxxiii. 17.

Empower'd to gaze; and undestroy'd,
Deeper and deeper plunge in light.

Though scarcely now their laggard glance
Reach to an arrow's flight, that day
They shall behold, and not in trance,
"The region very far away."

If Memory sometimes at our spell
Refuse to speak, or speak amiss,
We shall not need her where we dwell
Ever in sight of all our bliss.

Meanwhile, if over sea or sky
Some tender lights unnotic'd fleet,
Or on lov'd features dawn and die,
Unread, to us, their lesson sweet;

Yet are there saddening sights around,
Which Heaven, in mercy, spares us too,
And we see far in holy ground,
If duly purg'd our mental view.

The distant landscape draws not nigh
For all our gazing; but the soul,

That upward looks, may still descry
  Nearer, each day, the brightening goal.

And thou, too curious ear, that fain
  Wouldst thread the maze of Harmony,
Content thee with one simple strain,
  The lowlier, sure, the worthier thee;

Till thou art duly trained, and taught
  The concord sweet of Love divine:
Then, with that inward Music fraught,
  For ever rise, and sing, and shine.

VII.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God. *St. Luke* ii. 13.

WHAT sudden blaze of song
Spreads o'er th' expanse of Heav'n?
In waves of light it thrills along,
Th' angelic signal given—
"Glory to God!" from yonder central fire
Flows out the echoing lay beyond the starry quire;

Like circles widening round
Upon a clear blue river,
Orb after orb, the wondrous sound
Is echoed on for ever:

"Glory to God on high, on earth be peace,
"And love towards men of love[k]—salvation and
"release."

Yet stay, before thou dare
To join that festal throng;
Listen and mark what gentle air
First stirr'd the tide of song;
'Tis not, "the Saviour born in David's home,
"To whom for power and health obedient worlds
"should come:"—

'Tis not, "the Christ the Lord:"—
With fix'd adoring look
The choir of Angels caught the word,
Nor yet their silence broke:
But when they heard the sign, where Christ should be,
In sudden light they shone and heavenly harmony.

Wrapp'd in his swaddling bands,
And in his manger laid,

[k] I have ventured to adopt the reading of the Vulgate, as being generally known through Pergolesi's beautiful composition, "Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax *hominibus bonae voluntatis*."

The hope and glory of all lands
Is come to the world's aid:
No peaceful home upon his cradle smil'd,
Guests rudely went and came, where slept the royal child.

But where Thou dwellest, Lord,
No other thought should be,
Once duly welcom'd and ador'd,
How should I part with Thee?
Bethlehem must lose Thee soon, but Thou wilt grace
The single heart to be thy sure abiding-place.

Thee, on the bosom laid
Of a pure virgin mind,
In quiet ever, and in shade,
Shepherd and sage may find;
They, who have bow'd untaught to Nature's sway,
And they, who follow Truth along her star-pav'd way.

The pastoral spirits first
Approach Thee, Babe divine,
For they in lowly thoughts are nurs'd,
Meet for thy lowly shrine:

Sooner than they should miss where Thou dost dwell,
Angels from Heaven will stoop to guide them to thy cell.

Still, as the day comes round
For Thee to be reveal'd,
By wakeful shepherds Thou art found,
Abiding in the field.
All through the wintry heaven and chill night air,
In music and in light Thou dawnest on their prayer.

O faint not ye for fear—
What though your wandering sheep,
Reckless of what they see and hear,
Lie lost in wilful sleep?
High Heaven in mercy to your sad annoy
Still greets you with glad tidings of immortal joy.

Think on th' eternal home,
The Saviour left for you;
Think on the Lord most holy, come
To dwell with hearts untrue:
So shall ye tread untir'd his pastoral ways,
And in the darkness sing your carol of high praise.

VIII.

ST. STEPHEN'S DAY.

He, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. *Acts* vii. 55.

AS rays around the source of light
Stream upward ere he glow in sight,
And watching by his future flight
Set the clear heavens on fire;
So on the King of Martyrs wait
Three chosen bands, in royal state[1],
And all earth owns, of good and great,
Is gather'd in that choir.

[1] Wheatley on the Common Prayer, c. v. sect. iv. 2. "As there are three kinds of martyrdom, the first both in will and deed, which is the highest; the second in will but not in deed; the third in deed but not in will; so the Church commemorates these martyrs in the same order: St. Stephen first, who suffered death both in will and deed; St. John the Evangelist next, who suffered martyrdom in will but not in deed; the holy Innocents last, who suffered in deed but not in will."

One presses on, and welcomes death:
One calmly yields his willing breath,
Nor slow, nor hurrying, but in faith
Content to die or live:
And some, the darlings of their Lord,
Play smiling with the flame and sword,
And, ere they speak, to his sure word
Unconscious witness give.

Foremost and nearest to his throne,
By perfect robes of triumph known,
And likest Him in look and tone,
The holy Stephen kneels,
With stedfast gaze, as when the sky
Flew open to his fainting eye,
Which, like a fading lamp, flash'd high,
Seeing what death conceals.

Well might you guess what vision bright
Was present to his raptur'd sight,
Even as reflected streams of light
Their solar source betray—
The glory which our GOD surrounds,
The Son of Man, th' atoning wounds—

He sees them all; and earth's dull bounds
Are melting fast away.

He sees them all—no other view
Could stamp the Saviour's likeness true,
Or with his love so deep embrue
Man's sullen heart and gross—
"Jesu, do Thou my soul receive:
"Jesu, do Thou my foes forgive:"
He who would learn that prayer, must live
Under the holy Cross.

He, though he seem on earth to move,
Must glide in air like gentle dove,
From yon unclouded depths above
Must draw his purer breath;
Till men behold his angel face
All radiant with celestial grace [m],
Martyr all o'er, and meet to trace
The lines of Jesus' death.

[m] And all that were in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. *Acts* vi. 15.

IX.

ST. JOHN'S DAY.

Peter seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. *St. John* xxi. 21, 22.

"LORD, and what shall this man do?"
Ask'st thou, Christian, for thy friend?
If his love for Christ be true,
Christ hath told thee of his end:
This is he whom God approves,
This is he whom Jesus loves.

Ask not of him more than this,
Leave it in his Saviour's breast,
Whether, early call'd to bliss,
He in youth shall find his rest,
Or armed in his station wait
Till his Lord be at the gate:

Whether in his lonely course
(Lonely, not forlorn) he stay,
Or with Love's supporting force
Cheat the toil and cheer the way:
Leave it all in his high hand,
Who doth hearts as streams command [n].

Gales from heaven, if so he will,
Sweeter melodies can wake
On the lonely mountain rill
Than the meeting waters make.
Who hath the Father and the Son,
May be left, but not alone.

Sick or healthful, slave or free,
Wealthy, or despis'd and poor—
What is that to him or thee,
So his love to Christ endure?
When the shore is won at last,
Who will count the billows past?

[n] The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will. *Proverbs* xxi. 1.

Only, since our souls will shrink
At the touch of natural grief,
When our earthly lov'd ones sink,
Lend us, Lord, thy sure relief;
Patient hearts, their pain to see,
And thy grace, to follow Thee.

X.

THE HOLY INNOCENTS.

These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. *Revelations* xiv. 4.

SAY, ye celestial guards, who wait
In Bethlehem, round the Saviour's palace gate,
Say, who are these on golden wings,
That hover o'er the new-born King of kings,
Their palms and garlands telling plain
That they are of the glorious martyr train,
Next to yourselves ordain'd to praise
His name, and brighten as on Him they gaze?

But where their spoils and trophies? where
The glorious dint a martyr's shield should bear?
How chance no cheek among them wears
The deep-worn trace of penitential tears,

But all is bright and smiling love,
As if, fresh-borne from Eden's happy grove,
They had flown here, their King to see,
Nor ever had been heirs of dark mortality?

Ask, and some angel will reply,
"These, like yourselves, were born to sin and die,
"But ere the poison root was grown,
"God set his seal, and mark'd them for his own.
"Baptiz'd in blood for Jesus' sake,
"Now underneath the cross their bed they make,
"Not to be scar'd from that sure rest
"By frighten'd mother's shriek, or warrior's waving
"crest."

Mindful of these, the first fruits sweet
Borne by the suffering Church her Lord to greet;
Bless'd Jesus ever lov'd to trace
The "innocent brightness" of an infant's face.
He rais'd them in his holy arms,
He bless'd them from the world and all its harms:
Heirs though they were of sin and shame,
He bless'd them in his own and in his Father's name.

Then, as each fond unconscious child
On th' everlasting Parent sweetly smil'd,
(Like infants sporting on the shore,
That tremble not at Ocean's boundless roar)
Were they not present to thy thought,
All souls, that in their cradles thou hast bought?
But chiefly these, who died for Thee,
That Thou might'st live for them a sadder death to see.

And next to these, thy gracious word
Was as a pledge of benediction, stor'd
For Christian mothers, while they moan
Their treasur'd hopes, just born, baptiz'd, and gone.
Oh joy for Rachel's broken heart!
She and her babes shall meet no more to part;
So dear to Christ her pious haste
To trust them in his arms, for ever safe embrac'd.

She dares not grudge to leave them there,
Where to behold them was her heart's first prayer,
She dares not grieve—but she must weep,
As her pale placid martyr sinks to sleep,

Teaching so well and silently
How, at the shepherd's call, the lamb should die:
How happier far than life the end
Of souls that infant-like beneath their burthen bend.

XI.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS.

So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down. *Isaiah* xxxviii. 8. Cf. *Josh.* x. 13.

'TIS true, of old th' unchanging sun
His daily course refus'd to run,
The pale moon hurrying to the west
Paus'd at a mortal's call, to aid
Th' avenging storm of war, that laid
Seven guilty realms at once on earth's defiled breast.

But can it be, one suppliant tear
Should stay the ever-moving sphere?
A sick man's lowly breathed sigh,
When from the world he turns away [o],
And hides his weary eyes to pray,
Should change your mystic dance, ye wanderers of the sky?

[o] And Hezekiah turned his face towards the wall, and prayed unto the Lord.

We too, O Lord, would fain command,
As then, thy wonder-working hand,
And backward force the waves of Time,
That now so swift and silent bear
Our restless bark from year to year:
Help us to pause and mourn to Thee our tale of crime

Bright hopes, that erst the bosom warm'd,
And vows, too pure to be perform'd,
And prayers blown wide by gales of care;—
These, and such faint half waking dreams,
Like stormy lights on mountain streams,
Wavering and broken all, athwart the conscience glare.

How shall we 'scape th' o'erwhelming past?
Can spirits broken, joys o'ercast,
And eyes that never more may smile:—
Can these th' avenging bolt delay,
Or win us back one little day
The bitterness of death to soften and beguile!

Father and Lover of our souls!
Though darkly round thine anger rolls,
Thy sunshine smiles beneath the gloom,

Thou seek'st to warn us, not confound,
Thy showers would pierce the harden'd ground,
And win it to give out its brightness and perfume.

Thou smil'st on us in wrath, and we,
Even in remorse, would smile on Thee;
The tears that bathe our offer'd hearts,
We would not have them stain'd and dim,
But dropp'd from wings of seraphim,
All glowing with the light accepted Love imparts.

Time's waters will not ebb, nor stay,
Power cannot change them, but Love may,
What cannot be, Love counts it done.
Deep in the heart, her searching view
Can read where Faith is fix'd and true,
Through shades of setting life can see Heaven's work begun.

O Thou, who keep'st the Key of Love,
Open thy fount, eternal Dove,
And overflow this heart of mine,
Enlarging as it fills with Thee,
Till in one blaze of charity
Care and remorse are lost, like motes in light divine.

Till, as each moment wafts us higher,
By every gush of pure desire,
And high-breath'd hopes of joys above,
By every sacred sigh we heave,
Whole years of folly we outlive,
In his unerring sight, who measures Life by Love.

XII.

THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST.

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands. *Colossians* ii. 11.

THE year begins with Thee,
And Thou beginn'st with woe,
To let the world of sinners see
That blood for sin must flow.

Thine infant cries, O Lord,
Thy tears upon the breast,
Are not enough—the legal sword
Must do its stern behest.

Like sacrificial wine
Pour'd on a victim's head,
Are those few precious drops of thine,
Now first to offering led

They are the pledge and seal
Of Christ's unswerving faith
Given to his Sire, our souls to heal,
Although it cost his death.

They to his church of old,
To each true Jewish heart,
In Gospel graces manif ld
Communion blest impart.

Now of thy love we deem
As of an ocean vast,
Mounting in tides against the stream
Of ages gone and past.

Both theirs and ours Thou art,
As we and they are thine;
Kings, Prophets, Patriarchs—all have part
Along the sacred line.

By blood and water too
God's mark is set on Thee,
That in Thee every faithful view
Both covenants might see.

O bond of union, dear
And strong as is thy grace!
Saints, parted by a thousand year,
May thus in heart embrace.

Is there a mourner true,
Who fallen on faithless days,
Sighs for the heart-consoling view
Of those, Heaven deign'd to praise?

In spirit may'st thou meet
With faithful Abraham here,
Whom soon in Eden thou shalt greet
A nursing Father dear.

Wouldst thou a Poet be?
And would thy dull heart fain
Borrow of Israel's minstrelsy
One high enraptur'd strain?

Come here thy soul to tune—
Here set thy feeble chaunt,
Here, if at all beneath the moon,
Is holy David's haunt.

Art thou a child of tears,
Cradled in care and woe?
And seems it hard, thy vernal years
Few vernal joys can shew?

And fall the sounds of mirth
Sad on thy lonely heart,
From all the hopes and charms of earth
Untimely call'd to part?

Look here, and hold thy peace:
The Giver of all good
Even from the womb takes no release
From suffering, tears, and blood.

If thou wouldst reap in love,
First sow in holy fear:
So life a winter's morn may prove
To a bright endless year.

XIII.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS.

When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. *Isaiah* xli. 17.

AND wilt Thou hear the fever'd heart
To Thee in silence cry?
And as th' inconstant wildfires dart
Out of the restless eye,
Wilt Thou forgive the wayward thought,
By kindly woes yet half untaught
A Saviour's right, so dearly bought,
That Hope should never die?

Thou wilt: for many a languid prayer
Has reach'd Thee from the wild,
Since the lorn mother, wandering there,
Cast down her fainting child [p],

[p] Hagar. See Gen. xxi. 15.

Then stole apart to weep and die,
Nor knew an angel form was nigh
To shew soft waters gushing by
And dewy shadows mild.

Thou wilt—for Thou art Israel's God.
And thine unwearied arm
Is ready yet with Moses' rod,
The hidden rill to charm
Out of the dry unfathom'd deep
Of sands, that lie in lifeless sleep,
Save when the scorching whirlwinds heap
Their waves in rude alarm.

Those moments of wild wrath are thine—
Thine too the drearier hour
When o'er th' horizon's silent line
Fond hopeless fancies cower,
And on the traveller's listless way
Rises and sets th' unchanging day,
No cloud in heaven to slake its ray,
On earth no sheltering bower.

Thou wilt be there, and not forsake,
To turn the bitter pool

Into a bright and breezy lake,
The throbbing brow to cool:
Till left awhile with Thee alone
The wilful heart be fain to own
That He, by whom our bright hours shone,
Our darkness best may rule.

The scent of water far away
Upon the breeze is flung:
The desert pelican to-day
Securely leaves her young,
Reproving thankless man, who fears
To journey on a few lone years,
Wher on the sand thy step appears,
Thy crown in sight is hung.

Thou, who didst sit on Jacob's well
The weary hour of noon [q],
The languid pulses Thou canst tell,
The nerveless spirit tune.
Thou from whose cross in anguish burst
The cry that own'd thy dying thirst [r],
To thee we turn, our last and first,
Our Sun and soothing Moon.

[q] St. John iv. 6. [r] St. John xix. 28.

From darkness, here, and dreariness
We ask not full repose,
Only be Thou at hand, to bless
Our trial hour of woes.
Is not the pilgrim's toil o'erpaid
By the clear rill and palmy shade?
And see we not, up Earth's dark glade,
The gate of Heaven unclose?

XIV.

THE EPIPHANY.

Behold, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was: when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

St. Matt. ii. 9, 10.

STAR of the East, how sweet art Thou,
Seen in Life's early morning sky,
Ere yet a cloud has dimm'd the brow,
While yet we gaze with childish eye.

When father, mother, nursing friend,
Most dearly lov'd, and loving best,
First bid us from their arms ascend,
Pointing to Thee in thy sure rest.

Too soon the glare of earthly day
Buries, to us, thy brightness keen,
And we are left to find our way
By faith and hope in Thee unseen.

What matter? if the waymarks sure
On every side are round us set,
Soon overleap'd, but not obscure?
'Tis ours to mark them or forget.

What matter? if in calm old age
Our childhood's star again arise,
Crowning our lonely pilgrimage
With all that cheers a wanderer's eyes?

Ne'er may we lose it from our sight,
Till all our hopes and thoughts are led
To where it stays its lucid flight
Over our Saviour's lowly bed.

There, swath'd in humblest poverty,
On Chastity's meek lap enshrin'd,
With breathless Reverence waiting by,
When we our sovereign Master find,

Will not the long-forgotten glow
Of mingled joy and awe return,
When stars above or flowers below
First made our infant spirits burn?

Look on us, Lord, and take our parts
Even on thy throne of purity!
From these our proud yet grovelling hearts
Hide not thy mild forgiving eye.

Did not the Gentile Church find grace,
Our mother dear, this favour'd day?
With gold and myrrh she sought thy face,
Nor didst Thou turn thy face away.

She too[s], in earlier, purer days,
Had watch'd Thee gleaming faint and far—
But wandering in self-chosen ways
She lost Thee quite, thou lovely star.

Yet had her Father's finger turn'd
To Thee her first enquiring glance:
The deeper shame within her burn'd,
When waken'd from her wilful trance.

Behold, her wisest throng thy gate,
Their richest, sweetest, purest store,
(Yet own'd too worthless and too late)
They lavish on the cottage-floor.

[s] The Patriarchal Church.

They give their best—O tenfold shame
On us their fallen progeny,
Who sacrifice the blind and lame[1]—
Who will not watch and pray with Thee!

[1] Malachi i. 8.

XV.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

They shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. *Isaiah* xliv. 4.

LESSONS sweet of spring returning,
Welcome to the thoughtful heart!
May I call ye sense or learning,
Instinct pure, or heav'n-taught art?
Be your title what it may,
Sweet the lengthening April day,
While with you the soul is free,
Ranging wild o'er hill and lea.

Soft as Memnon's harp at morning,
To the inward ear devout,
Touch'd by light, with heavenly warning
Your transporting chords ring out.

Every leaf in every nook,
Every wave in every brook,
Chanting with a solemn voice,
Minds us of our better choice.

Needs no show of mountain hoary,
  Winding shore or deepening glen,
Where the landscape in its glory
  Teaches truth to wandering men—
Give true hearts but earth and sky,
And some flowers to bloom and die,—
Homely scenes and simple views
Lowly thoughts may best infuse.

See the soft green willow springing
  Where the waters gently pass,
Every way her free arms flinging
  O'er the moist and reedy grass.
Long ere winter blasts are fled,
See her tipp'd with vernal red,
And her kindly flower display'd
Ere her leaf can cast a shade.

Though the rudest hand assail her,
  Patiently she droops awhile,

But when showers and breezes hail her,
  Wears again her willing smile.
Thus I learn contentment's power
From the slighted willow bower,
Ready to give thanks and live
On the least that Heaven may give.

If, the quiet brooklet leaving,
  Up the stony vale I wind,
Haply half in fancy grieving
  For the shades I leave behind,
By the dusty wayside drear,
Nightingales with joyous cheer,
Sing, my sadness to reprove,
Gladlier than in cultur'd grove.

Where the thickest boughs are twining
  Of the greenest darkest tree,
There they plunge, the light declining—
  All may hear, but none may see.
Fearless of the passing hoof,
Hardly will they fleet aloof;
So they live in modest ways,
Trust entire, and ceaseless praise.

XVI.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. *St. John* ii. 10.

THE heart of childhood is all mirth:
We frolic to and fro
As free and blithe, as if on earth
Were no such thing as woe.

But if indeed with reckless faith
We trust the flattering voice,
Which whispers, "Take thy fill ere death,
"Indulge thee and rejoice;"

Too surely, every setting day,
Some lost delight we mourn,
The flowers all die along our way,
Till we, too, die forlorn.

Such is the world's gay garish feast,
In her first charming bowl
Infusing all that fires the breast,
And cheats th' unstable soul.

And still, as loud the revel swells,
The fever'd pulse beats higher,
Till the sear'd taste from foulest wells
Is fain to slake its fire.

Unlike the feast of heavenly love
Spread at the Saviour's word
For souls that hear his call, and prove
Meet for his bridal board.

Why should we fear, youth's draught of joy,
If pure, would sparkle less?
Why should the cup the sooner cloy,
Which God hath deign'd to bless?

For, is it Hope, that thrills so keen
Along each bounding vein,
Still whispering glorious things unseen?—
Faith makes the vision plain.

The world would kill her soon: but Faith
Her daring dreams will cherish,
Speeding her gaze o'er time and death
To realms where nought can perish.

Or is it Love, the dear delight
Of hearts that know no guile,
That all around see all things bright
With their own magic smile?

The silent joy, that sinks so deep,
Of confidence and rest,
Lull'd in a father's arms to sleep,
Clasp'd to a mother's breast?

Who, but a Christian, through all life
That blessing may prolong?
Who, through the world's sad day of strife,
Still chaunt his morning song?

Fathers may hate us or forsake,
God's foundlings then are we:
Mother on child no pity take[t],
But we shall still have Thee.

We may look home, and seek in vain
A fond fraternal heart,
But Christ hath given his promise plain
To do a brother's part.

Nor shall dull age, as worldlings say,
The heavenward flame annoy:
The Saviour cannot pass away,
And with him lives our joy.

Ever the richest tenderest glow
Sets round th' autumnal sun—
But there sight fails: no heart may know
The bliss when life is done.

[t] Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget Thee! *Isaiah* xlix. 15.

Such is thy banquet, dearest Lord;
O give us grace, to cast
Our lot with thine, to trust thy word,
And keep our best till last.

XVII.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

When Jesus heard it he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel. *St. Matthew* viii. 10.

I MARK'D a rainbow in the north,
What time the wild autumnal sun
From his dark veil at noon look'd forth,
As glorying in his course half done,
Flinging soft radiance far and wide
Over the dusky heaven and bleak hill-side.

It was a gleam to memory dear,
And as I walk and muse apart,
When all seems faithless round and drear,
I would revive it in my heart,
And watch how light can find its way
To regions farthest from the fount of day.

Light flashes in the gloomiest sky,
And Music in the dullest plain,
For there the lark is soaring high
Over her flat and leafless reign,
And chanting in so blithe a tone,
It shames the weary heart to feel itself alone.

Brighter than rainbow in the north,
More cheery than the matin lark,
Is the soft gleam of Christian worth,
Which on some holy house we mark;
Dear to the pastor's aching heart
To think, where'er he looks, such gleam may have a part;

May dwell, unseen by all but Heaven,
Like diamond blazing in the mine;
For ever, where such grace is given,
It fears in open day to shine[u],

[u] Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof.

"From the first time that the impressions of religion settled deeply in his mind, he used great caution to conceal it; not only in obedience to the rule given by our Saviour, of fasting, praying, and giving alms in secret, but from a particular distrust he had of him-

Lest the deep stain it owns within
Break out, and faith be sham'd by the believer's sin.

In silence and afar they wait,
To find a prayer their Lord may hear:
Voice of the poor and desolate,
You best may bring it to his ear.
Your grateful intercessions rise
With more than royal pomp, and pierce the skies.

Happy the soul, whose precious cause
You in the sovereign Presence plead—
"This is the lover of thy laws [x],
"The friend of thine in fear and need"—
For to the poor thy mercy lends
That solemn style, "thy nation and thy friends."

He too is blest, whose outward eye
The graceful lines of art may trace,

self; for he said he was afraid he should at some time or other do some enormous thing, which if he were looked on as a very religious man, might cast a reproach on the profession of it, and give great advantages to impious men to blaspheme the name of God." *Burnet's Life of Hale, in Wordsworth's Eccl. Biog.* vi. 73.

[x] He loveth our nation.

While his free spirit, soaring high,
Discerns the glorious from the base;
Till out of dust his magic raise [y]
A home for prayer and love, and full harmonious praise.

Where far away and high above,
In maze on maze the tranced sight
Strays, mindful of that heavenly love
Which knows no end in depth or height.
While the strong breath of Music seems
To waft us ever on, soaring in blissful dreams.

What though in poor and humble guise
Thou here didst sojourn, cottage-born?
Yet from thy glory in the skies
Our earthly gold Thou dost not scorn—
For Love delights to bring her best,
And where Love is, that offering evermore is blest.

Love on the Saviour's dying head
Her spikenard drops unblam'd may pour,
May mount his cross, and wrap him dead
In spices from the golden shore [z];

[y] He hath built us a synagogue. [z] St. John xii. 7. xix. 30.

Risen, may embalm his sacred name
With all a Painter's art, and all a Minstrel's flame.

Worthless and lost our offerings seem,
Drops in the ocean of his praise;
But Mercy with her genial beam
Is ripening them to pearly blaze,
To sparkle in His crown above,
Who welcomes here a child's as there an angel's love.

XVIII.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

When they saw him, they besought him to depart out of their coasts. *St. Matthew* viii. 34.

THEY know th' Almighty's power,
Who, waken'd by the rushing midnight shower,
Watch for the fitful breeze
To howl and chafe amid the bending trees,
Watch for the still white gleam
To bathe the landscape in a fiery stream,
Touching the tremulous eye with sense of light
Too rapid and too pure for all but angel sight.

They know th' Almighty's love,
Who, when the whirlwinds rock the topmost grove,
Stand in the shade, and hear
The tumult with a deep exulting fear,

How, in their fiercest sway,
Curb'd by some power unseen, they die away,
Like a bold steed that owns his rider's arm,
Proud to be check'd and sooth'd by that o'er-mastering
charm.

But there are storms within
That heave the struggling heart with wilder din.
And there is power and love
The maniac's rushing frenzy to reprove,
And when he takes his seat,
Cloth'd and in calmness, at his Saviour's feet[a],
Is not the power as strange, the love as blest,
As when He said, Be still, and ocean sank to rest?

Woe to the wayward heart,
That gladlier turns to eye the shuddering start
Of Passion in her might,
Than marks the silent growth of grace and light;—
Pleas'd in the cheerless tomb
To linger, while the morning rays illume
Green lake, and cedar tuft, and spicy glade,
Shaking their dewy tresses now the storm is laid.

[a] St. Mark v. 15. iv. 39.

The storm is laid—and now
In his meek power He climbs the mountain's brow,
Who bade the waves go sleep,
And lash'd the vex'd fiends to their yawning deep.
How on a rock they stand,
Who watch his eye, and hold his guiding hand!
Not half so fix'd, amid her vassal hills,
Rises the holy pile that Kedron's valley fills.

And wilt thou seek again
Thy howling waste, thy charnel-house and chain,
And with the demons be,
Rather than clasp thine own Deliverer's knee?
Sure 'tis no heav'n-bred awe
That bids thee from his healing touch withdraw,
The world and He are struggling in thine heart,
And in thy reckless mood thou bidd'st thy Lord
depart.

He, merciful and mild,
As erst, beholding, loves his wayward child;
When souls of highest birth
Waste their impassion'd might on dreams of earth,

He opens Nature's book,
And on his glorious Gospel bids them look,
Till by such chords, as rule the choirs above,
Their lawless cries are turn'd to hymns of perfect love.

XIX.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God. *Isaiah* lix. 1, 2.

"WAKE, arm divine! awake,
"Eye of the only Wise!
"Now for thy glory's sake,
"Saviour and God, arise,
" And may thine ear, that sealed seems,
" In pity mark our mournful themes! "

Thus in her lonely hour
Thy Church is fain to cry,
As if thy love and power
Were vanish'd from her sky;
Yet God is there, and at his side
He triumphs, who for sinners died.

Ah! 'tis the world enthralls
The heaven betrothed breast:
The traitor Sense recalls
The soaring soul from rest.
That bitter sigh was all for earth,
For glories gone, and vanish'd mirth.

Age would to youth return,
Farther from heaven would be,
To feel the wildfire burn,
On idolizing knee
Again to fall, and rob thy shrine
Of hearts, the right of love divine.

Lord of this wandering flock!
Thou whose soft showers distil
On ocean waste or rock,
Free as on Hermon hill,
Do Thou our craven spirits cheer,
And shame away the selfish tear.

'Twas silent all and dead [b]
Beside the barren sea,

[b] See Acts viii. 26—40.

Where Philip's steps were led,
Led by a voice from Thee—
He rose and went, nor ask'd Thee why,
Nor stayed to heave one faithless sigh;

Upon his lonely way
The high-born traveller came,
Reading a mournful lay
Of "One who bore our shame [c],
"Silent himself, his name untold,
"And yet his glories were of old."

To muse what Heaven might mean
His wondering brow he rais'd,
And met an eye serene
That on him watchful gaz'd.
No wanderer e'er so welcome cross'd
A child's lone path in woodland lost.

Now wonder turns to love;
The scrolls of sacred lore
No darksome mazes prove;
The desert tires no more:

[c] Isaiah liii. 6—8.

They bathe where holy waters flow,
Then on their way rejoicing go.

They part to meet in heaven:
But of the joy they share,
Absolving and forgiven,
The sweet remembrance bear.
Where now that statesman, cold and proud,
Bewilder'd in a heartless crowd,

Starting and turning pale
At Rumour's angry din?
No storm can now assail
The charm he wears within,
Rejoicing still, and doing good,
And with the thought of God imbu'd.

No glare of high estate,
No gloom of woe or want,
The radiance can abate
Where heaven delights to haunt.
Sin only hides the genial ray,
And, round the cross, makes night of day.

Then weep it from thy heart;
So may'st thou duly learn
The intercessor's part,
Thy prayers and tears may earn
For fallen souls some healing breath,
Ere they have died th' Apostate's death.

XX.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 1 *St. John* iii. 2, 3.

THERE are, who darkling and alone,
Would wish the weary night were gone,
Though dawning morn should only shew
The secret of their unknown woe:
Who pray for sharpest throbs of pain
To ease them of doubt's galling chain:
"Only disperse the cloud," they cry,
"And if our fate be death, give light and let us die[d]."

Unwise I deem them, LORD, unmeet
To profit by thy chastenings sweet,

[d] Ἐν δὲ φάει καὶ ὀλέσσον.

For thou wouldst have us linger still
Upon the verge of good or ill,
That on thy guiding hand unseen
Our undivided hearts may lean,
And this our frail and foundering bark
Glide in the narrow wake of thy beloved ark.

'Tis so in war—the champion true
Loves victory more, when dim in view
He sees her glories gild afar
The dusky edge of stubborn war,
Then if th' untrodden bloodless field
The harvest of her laurels yield;
Let not my bark in calm abide,
But win her fearless way against the chafing tide.

'Tis so in love—the faithful heart
From her dim vision would not part,
When first to her fond gaze is given
That purest spot in Fancy's heaven,
For all the gorgeous sky beside,
Though pledg'd her own and sure t' abide;
Dearer than every past noon-day
That twilight gleam to her, though faint and far away.

So have I seen some tender flower
Priz'd above all the vernal bower,
Shelter'd beneath the coolest shade,
Upon the softest bosom laid,
So frail a gem, it scarce may bear
The playful touch of evening air;
When hardier grown we love it less,
And trust it from our sight, not needing our caress.

And wherefore is the sweet spring tide
Worth all the changeful year beside?
The last-born babe, why lies its part
Deep in the mother's inmost heart?
But that the LORD and source of love
Would have his weakest ever prove
Our tenderest care—and most of all
Our frail immortal souls, His work and Satan's thrall.

So be it, LORD; I know it best,
Though not as yet this wayward breast
Beat quite in answer to thy voice,
Yet surely I have made my choice;
I know not yet the promis'd bliss,
Know not if I shall win or miss;

So doubting, rather let me die,
Than close with aught beside, to last eternally.

What is the heaven we idly dream?
The self-deceiver's dreary theme,
A cloudless sun that softly shines,
Bright maidens and unfailing vines,
The warrior's pride, the hunter's mirth,
Poor fragments all of this low earth:
Such as in sleep would hardly soothe
A soul that once had tasted of immortal Truth.

What is the Heaven our GOD bestows?
No Prophet yet, no Angel knows;
Was never yet created eye
Could see across Eternity;
Not seraph's wing for ever soaring
Can pass the flight of souls adoring,
That nearer still and nearer grow
To th' unapproached LORD, once made for them so low.

Unseen, unfelt their earthly growth,
And self-accus'd of sin and sloth

They live and die: their names decay,
Their fragrance passes quite away;
Like violets in the freezing blast
No vernal steam around they cast,—
But they shall flourish from the tomb,
The breath of GOD shall wake them into od'rous bloom.

Then on th' incarnate SAVIOUR's breast,
The fount of sweetness, they shall rest,
Their spirits every hour imbu'd
More deeply with his precious blood.
But peace—still voice and closed eye
Suit best with hearts beyond the sky,
Hearts training in their low abode,
Daily to lose themselves in hope to find their GOD.

XXI.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made.

Romans i. 20.

THERE is a book, who runs may read,
Which heavenly truth imparts,
And all the lore its scholars need,
Pure eyes and Christian hearts.

The works of God above, below,
Within us and around,
Are pages in that book, to shew
How God himself is found.

The glorious sky embracing all
Is like the Maker's love,
Wherewith encompass'd, great and small
In peace and order move.

The Moon above, the Church below,
A wondrous race they run,
But all their radiance, all their glow,
Each borrows of its Sun.

The Saviour lends the light and heat
That crowns his holy hill;
The saints, like stars, around his seat,
Perform their courses still [e].

The saints above are stars in Heaven—
What are the saints on earth?
Like trees they stand whom God has given [f],
Our Eden's happy birth.

Faith is their fix'd unswerving root,
Hope their unfading flower,
Fair deeds of charity their fruit,
The glory of their bower.

The dew of heaven is like thy grace [g],
It steals in silence down;
But where it lights, the favour'd place
By richest fruits is known.

[e] Dan. xii. 3. [f] Isaiah lx. 21. [g] Psalm lxviii. 9.

One Name above all glorious names
With its ten thousand tongues
The everlasting sea proclaims,
Echoing angelic songs.

The raging Fire[h], the roaring Wind,
Thy boundless power display:
But in the gentler breeze we find
Thy Spirit's viewless way[i].

Two worlds are ours: 'tis only Sin
Forbids us to descry
The mystic heaven and earth within,
Plain as the sea and sky.

Thou, who hast given me eyes to see
And love this sight so fair,
Give me a heart to find out Thee,
And read Thee every where.

[h] Hebrews xii. 29. [i] St. John iii. 8.

XXII.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

So he drove out the man, and placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. *Gen.* iii. 24. Compare c. vi.

FOE of mankind! too bold thy race:
Thou runn'st at such a reckless pace,
Thine own dire work thou surely wilt confound:
'Twas but one little drop of sin
We saw this morning enter in,
And lo! at eventide the world is drown'd.

See here the fruit of wandering eyes,
Of worldly longings to be wise,
Of Passion dwelling on forbidden sweets:
Ye lawless glances, freely rove;
Ruin below and wrath above
Are all that now the wildering fancy meets.

Lord, when in some deep garden glade,
Of Thee and of myself afraid,
From thoughts like these among the bowers I hide,
Nearest and loudest then of all
I seem to hear the Judge's call:—
"Where art thou, fallen man? come forth, and be
"thou tried."

Trembling before Thee as I stand,
Where'er I gaze on either hand
The sentence is gone forth, the ground is curs'd:
Yet mingled with the penal shower
Some drops of balm in every bower
Steal down like April dews, that softest fall and first.

If filial and maternal love [k]
Memorial of our guilt must prove,
If sinful babes in sorrow must be born,
Yet, to assuage her sharpest throes,
The faithful mother surely knows,
This was the way Thou cam'st to save the world
forlorn.

[k] In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children.

If blessed wedlock may not bless[l]
Without some tinge of bitterness
To dash her cup of joy, since Eden lost,
Chaining to earth with strong desire
Hearts that would highest else aspire,
And o'er the tenderer sex usurping ever most;

Yet by the light of Christian lore
'Tis blind Idolatry no more,
But a sweet help and pattern of true love,
Shewing how best the soul may cling
To her immortal Spouse and King,
How He should rule, and she with full desire approve.

If niggard Earth her treasures hide[m],
To all but labouring hands denied,
Lavish of thorns and worthless weeds alone,
The doom is half in mercy given
To train us in our way to Heaven,
And shew our lagging souls how glory must be won.

[l] Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

[m] Cursed is the ground for thy sake.

If on the sinner's outward frame [n]
God hath impress'd his mark of blame,
And even our bodies shrink at touch of light,
Yet mercy hath not left us bare:
The very weeds we daily wear [o]
Are to Faith's eye a pledge of God's forgiving might.

And oh! if yet one arrow more [p],
The sharpest of th' Almighty's store,
Tremble upon the string—a sinner's death—
Art Thou not by to soothe and save,
To lay us gently in the grave,
To close the weary eye and hush the parting breath?

Therefore in sight of man bereft
The happy garden still was left,
The fiery sword that guarded shew'd it too;
Turning all ways, the world to teach,
That though as yet beyond our reach,
Still in its place the tree of life and glory grew.

[n] I was afraid because I was naked.
[o] The Lord God made coats of skins, and he clothed them.
[p] Thou shalt surely die.

XXIII.

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. *Gen.* ix. 13.

SWEET Dove! the softest, steadiest plume
In all the sunbright sky,
Brightening in ever-changeful bloom
As breezes change on high;—

Sweet Leaf! the pledge of peace and mirth,
"Long sought, and lately won,"
Bless'd increase of reviving Earth,
When first it felt the Sun;—

Sweet Rainbow! pride of summer days,
High set at Heaven's command,
Though into drear and dusky haze
Thou melt on either hand;—

Dear tokens of a pardoning God,
We hail ye, one and all,
As when our fathers walk'd abroad,
Freed from their twelvemonths' thrall.

How joyful from th' imprisoning ark,
On the green earth they spring!
Not blither, after showers, the Lark
Mounts up with glistening wing.

So home-bound sailors spring to shore,
Two oceans safely past;
So happy souls, when life is o'er,
Plunge in th' empyreal vast.

What wins their first and fondest gaze
In all the blissful field,
And keeps it through a thousand days?
Love face to face reveal'd:

Love imag'd in that cordial look
Our Lord in Eden bends
On souls that sin and earth forsook
In time to die his friends.

And what most welcome and serene
Dawns on the Patriarch's eye,
In all th' emerging hills so green,
In all the brightening sky?

What but the gentle rainbow's gleam,
Soothing the wearied sight,
That cannot bear the solar beam,
With soft undazzling light?

Lord, if our fathers turn'd to thee
With such adoring gaze,
Wondering frail man thy light should see
Without thy scorching blaze.

Where is our love, and where our hearts,
We who have seen thy Son,
Have tried thy Spirit's winning arts,
And yet we are not won?

The Son of God in radiance beam'd
Too bright for us to scan,
But we may face the rays that stream'd
From the mild Son of Man.

There, parted into rainbow hues,
In sweet harmonious strife,
We see celestial love diffuse
Its light o'er Jesus' life.

God, by His bow, vouchsafes to write
This truth in Heaven above;
As every lovely hue is Light,
So every grace is Love.

XXIV.

ASH-WEDNESDAY.

When thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret. *St. Matthew* vi. 17.

"YES—deep within and deeper yet
"The rankling shaft of conscience hide,
"Quick let the swelling eye forget
"The tears that in the heart abide.
"Calm be the voice, the aspect bold,
"No shuddering pass o'er lip or brow,
"For why should Innocence be told
"The pangs that guilty spirits bow?

"The loving eye that watches thine
"Close as the air that wraps thee round—
"Why in thy sorrow should it pine,
"Since never of thy sin it found?

"And wherefore should the heathen see [q]
"What chains of darkness thee enslave,
"And mocking say, Lo, this is he
"Who own'd a God that could not save?"

Thus oft the mourner's wayward heart
Tempts him to hide his grief and die,
Too feeble for Confession's smart,
Too proud to bear a pitying eye;
How sweet, in that dark hour, to fall
On bosoms waiting to receive
Our sighs, and gently whisper all!
They love us—will not God forgive?

Else let us keep our fast within,
Till Heaven and we are quite alone,
Then let the grief, the shame, the sin,
Before the mercy-seat be thrown.
Between the porch and altar weep,
Unworthy of the holiest place,
Yet hoping near the shrine to keep
One lowly cell in sight of grace.

[q] Wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God. *Joel* ii. 17.

Nor fear lest sympathy should fail—
  Hast thou not seen, in night-hours drear,
When racking thoughts the heart assail,
  The glimmering stars by turns appear,
And from th' eternal home above
  With silent news of mercy steal?
So Angels pause on tasks of love,
  To look where sorrowing sinners kneel.

Or if no Angel pass that way,
  He who in secret sees, perchance
May bid his own heart-warming ray
  Toward thee stream with kindlier glance,
As when upon His drooping head
  His Father's light was pour'd from Heaven,
What time, unsheltered and unfed [r],
  Far in the wild His steps were driven.

High thoughts were with Him in that hour,
  Untold, unspeakable on earth—
And who can stay the soaring power
  Of spirits wean'd from worldly mirth,

[r] St. Matt. iv. 1.

While far beyond the sound of praise
  With upward eye they float serene,
And learn to bear their Saviour's blaze
  When Judgment shall undraw the screen.

XXV.

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

Haste thee, escape thither, for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither: therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. *Genesis* xix. 22.

"ANGEL of wrath! why linger in mid air,
"While the devoted city's cry
"Louder and louder swells? and canst thou spare,
"Thy full-charg'd vial standing by?"
Thus, with stern voice, unsparing Justice pleads:
He hears her not—with soften'd gaze
His eye is following where sweet Mercy leads,
And till she give the sign, his fury stays.

Guided by her, along the mountain road,
Far through the twilight of the morn,
With hurrying footsteps from th' accurs'd abode
He sees the holy household borne:

Angels, or more, on either hand are nigh,
To speed them o'er the tempting plain,
Lingering in heart, and with frail sidelong eye
Seeking how near they may unharm'd remain.

"Ah wherefore gleam those upland slopes so fair?
"And why, through every woodland arch,
"Swells yon bright vale, as Eden rich and rare,
"Where Jordan winds his stately march;
"If all must be forsaken, ruin'd all,
"If God have planted but to burn?—
"Surely not yet th' avenging shower will fall,
"Though to my home for one last look I turn."

Thus while they waver, surely long ago
They had provoked the withering blast,
But that the merciful Avengers know
Their frailty well, and hold them fast.
"Haste, for thy life escape, nor look behind"—
Ever in thrilling sounds like these
They check the wandering eye, severely kind,
Nor let the sinner lose his soul at ease.

And when, o'erwearied with the steep ascent,
We for a nearer refuge crave,

One little spot of ground in mercy lent,
One hour of home before the grave,
Oft in his pity o'er his children weak,
His hand withdraws the penal fire,
And where we fondly cling, forbears to wreak
Full vengeance, till our hearts are wean'd entire.

Thus, by the merits of one righteous man,
The Church, our Zoar, shall abide,
Till she abuse, so sore, her lengthen'd span,
Even Mercy's self her face must hide.
Then, onward yet a step, thou hard-won soul;
Though in the Church thou know thy place,
The mountain farther lies—there seek thy goal,
There breathe at large, o'erpast thy dangerous race.

Sweet is the smile of home; the mutual look
When hearts are of each other sure;
Sweet all the joys that crowd the household nook,
The haunt of all affections pure;
Yet in the world even these abide, and we
Above the world our calling boast:
Once gain the mountain top, and thou art free:
Till then, who rest, presume; who turn to look, are lost.

XXVI.

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father. *Gen.* xxvii. 34. (Compare *Hebrews* xii. 17. He found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.) [a]

"AND is there in GOD's world so drear a place
"Where the loud bitter cry is rais'd in vain?
"Where tears of penance come too late for grace,
"As on th' uprooted flower the genial rain?"

[a] The author earnestly hopes, that nothing in these stanzas will be understood to express any opinion as to the general efficacy of what is called "a death-bed repentance." Such questions are best left in the merciful obscurity with which Scripture has enveloped them. Esau's probation, as far as his birthright was concerned, was quite over when he uttered the cry in the text. His despondency therefore is not parallel to any thing on this side the grave.

'Tis even so: the sovereign Lord of souls
Stores in the dungeon of his boundless realm
Each bolt, that o'er the sinner vainly rolls,
With gather'd wrath the reprobate to whelm.

Will the storm hear the sailor's piteous cry[t],
Taught to mistrust, too late, the tempting wave,
When all around he sees but sea and sky,
A God in anger, a self-chosen grave?

Or will the thorns, that strew intemperance' bed,
Turn with a wish to down? will late remorse
Recall the shaft the murderer's hand has sped,
Or from the guiltless bosom turn its course?

Then may th' unbodied soul in safety fleet
Through the dark curtains of the world above,
Fresh from the stain of crime; nor fear to meet
The God, whom here she would not learn to love:

Then is there hope for such as die unblest,
That angel wings may waft them to the shore,
Nor need th' unready virgin strike her breast,
Nor wait desponding round the bridegroom's door.

[t] Cf. Bp. Butler's Analogy, p. 54—64. ed. 1736.

But where is then the stay of contrite hearts?
Of old they lean'd on thy eternal word,
But with the sinner's fear their hope departs,
Fast link'd as thy great Name to Thee, O Lord.

That Name, by which thy faithful oath is past,
That we should endless be, for joy or woe;—
And if the treasures of thy wrath could waste,
Thy lovers must their promis'd Heaven forego.

But ask of elder days, earth's vernal hour,
When in familiar talk God's voice was heard,
When at the Patriarch's call the fiery shower
Propitious o'er the turf-built shrine appear'd.

Watch by our father Isaac's pastoral door—
The birthright sold, the blessing lost and won,
Tell, Heaven has wrath that can relent no more,
The Grave, dark deeds that cannot be undone.

We barter life for pottage; sell true bliss
For wealth or power, for pleasure or renown;
Thus, Esau-like, our Father's blessing miss,
Then wash with fruitless tears our faded crown.

Our faded crown, despis'd and flung aside,
Shall on some brother's brow immortal bloom,
No partial hand the blessing may misguide;
No flattering fancy change our Monarch's doom:

His righteous doom, that meek true-hearted Love
The everlasting birthright should receive,
The softest dews drop on her from above[u],
The richest green her mountain garland weave:

Her brethren, mightiest, wisest, eldest born,
Bow to her sway, and move at her behest:
Isaac's fond blessing may not fall on scorn,
Nor Balaam's curse on Love, which God hath blest.

[u] Genesis xxvii. 27, 28.

XXVII.

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils. *St. Luke* xi. 21, 22.

SEE Lucifer like lightning fall
Dash'd from his throne of pride;
While, answering Thy victorious call,
The Saints his spoils divide,
This world of thine, by him usurp'd too long,
Now opening all her stores to heal thy servants' wrong.

So when the first-born of thy foes
Dead in the darkness lay,
When thy redeem'd at midnight rose
And cast their bonds away,

The orphan'd realm threw wide her gates, and told
Into freed Israel's lap her jewels and her gold.

And when their wondrous march was o'er,
And they had won their homes,
Where Abraham fed his flock of yore,
Among their fathers' tombs;—
A land that drinks the rain of heaven at will,
Whose waters kiss the feet of many a vine-clad hill;—

Oft as they watch'd, at thoughtful eve,
A gale from bowers of balm
Sweep o'er the billowy corn, and heave
The tresses of the palm,
Just as the lingering Sun had touch'd with gold,
Far o'er the cedar shade, some tower of giants old:

It was a fearful joy, I ween,
To trace the Heathen's toil,
The limpid wells, the orchards green
Left ready for the spoil,
The household stores untouch'd, the roses bright
Wreath'd o'er the cottage walls in garlands of delight.

And now another Canaan yields
To thine all-conquering ark;—
Fly from the "old poetic" fields [x],
Ye Paynim shadows dark!
Immortal Greece, dear land of glorious lays,
Lo! here the "unknown God" of thy unconscious praise!

The olive wreath, the ivied wand,
"The sword in myrtles drest,"
Each legend of the shadowy strand
Now wakes a vision blest:
As little children lisp, and tell of Heaven,
So thoughts beyond their thought to those high Bards were given.

And these are ours: Thy partial grace
The tempting treasure lends:
These relics of a guilty race
Are forfeit to thy friends:
What seem'd an idol hymn, now breathes of Thee,
Tun'd by Faith's ear to some celestial melody.

[x] Where each old poetic mountain
Inspiration breath'd around. *Gray.*

There's not a strain to memory dear[y],
Nor flower in classic grove,
There's not a sweet note warbled here,
But minds us of thy Love.
O Lord, our Lord, and spoiler of our foes,
There is no light but thine: with Thee all beauty glows.

[y] See Burns's Works, i. 293. Dr. Currie's Edition.

XXVIII.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

Joseph made haste, for his bowels did yearn upon his brother; and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there. *Gen.* xliii. 30.

There stood no man with them, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. *Gen.* xlv. 1.

WHEN Nature tries her finest touch,
Weaving her vernal wreath,
Mark ye, how close she veils her round,
Not to be trac'd by sight or sound,
Nor soil'd by ruder breath?

Who ever saw the earliest rose
First open her sweet breast?
Or, when the summer sun goes down,
The first soft star in evening's crown
Light up her gleaming crest?

Fondly we seek the dawning bloom
On features wan and fair,—
The gazing eye no change can trace,
But look away a little space,
Then turn, and, lo! 'tis there.

But there's a sweeter flower than e'er
Blush'd on the rosy spray—
A brighter star, a richer bloom
Than e'er did western heaven illume
At close of summer day.

'Tis Love, the last best gift of Heaven;
Love gentle, holy, pure:
But tenderer than a dove's soft eye,
The searching sun, the open sky,
She never could endure.

Even human Love will shrink from sight
Here in the coarse rude earth:
How then should rash intruding glance
Break in upon *her* sacred trance
Who boasts a heavenly birth?

So still and secret is her growth,
Ever the truest heart,
Where deepest strikes her kindly root
For hope or joy, for flower or fruit,
Least knows its happy part.

God only, and good angels, look
Behind the blissful screen—
As when, triumphant o'er his woes,
The Son of God by moonlight rose,
By all but Heaven unseen:

As when the holy Maid beheld
Her risen Son and Lord:
Thought has not colours half so fair
That she to paint that hour may dare,
In silence best ador'd.

The gracious Dove, that brought from Heaven
The earnest of our bliss,
Of many a chosen witness telling,
On many a happy vision dwelling,
Sings not a note of this.

So, truest image of the Christ,
Old Israel's long-lost son,
What time, with sweet forgiving cheer,
He call'd his conscious brethren near,
Would weep with them alone.

He could not trust his melting soul
But in his Maker's sight—
Then why should gentle hearts and true
Bare to the rude world's withering view
Their treasure of delight!

No—let the dainty rose awhile
Her bashful fragrance hide—
Rend not her silken veil too soon,
But leave her, in her own soft noon,
To flourish and abide.

XXIX.

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

And Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burned. *Exodus* iii. 3.

TH' historic Muse, from age to age,
Thro' many a waste heart-sickening page
Hath trac'd the works of Man:
But a celestial call to-day
Stays her, like Moses, on her way,
The works of GOD to scan.

Far seen across the sandy wild,
Where, like a solitary child,
He thoughtless roam'd and free,
One towering thorn* was wrapt in flame—
Bright without blaze it went and came:
Who would not turn and see?

* "Seneh:" said to be a sort of Acacia.

Along the mountain ledges green
The scatter'd sheep at will may glean
The Desert's spicy stores:
The while, with undivided heart,
The shepherd talks with God apart,
And, as he talks, adores.

Ye too, who tend Christ's wildering flock,
Well may ye gather round the rock
That once was Sion's hill;
To watch the fire upon the mount
Still blazing, like the solar fount,
Yet unconsuming still.

Caught from that blaze by wrath divine,
Lost branches of the once-lov'd vine,
Now wither'd, spent, and sear,
See Israel's sons, like glowing brands,
Tost wildly o'er a thousand lands
For twice a thousand year.

God will not quench nor slay them quite,
But lifts them like a beacon light
Th' apostate Church to scare:

Or like pale ghosts that darkling roam,
Hovering around their ancient home,
But find no refuge there.

Ye blessed Angels! if of you
There be, who love the ways to view
Of Kings and Kingdoms here;
(And sure, 'tis worth an Angel's gaze,
To see, throughout that dreary maze,
God teaching love and fear:)

Oh say, in all the bleak expanse,
Is there a spot to win your glance,
So bright, so dark as this?
A hopeless faith, a homeless race,
Yet seeking the most holy place,
And owning the true bliss?

Salted with fire they seem [a], to shew
How spirits lost in endless woe
May undecaying live.
Oh sickening thought! yet hold it fast

[a] St. Mark ix. 49.

Long as this glittering world shall last,
Or sin at heart survive.

And hark! amid the flashing fire,
Mingling with tones of fear and ire,
Soft Mercy's undersong—
'Tis Abraham's God who speaks so loud,
His people's cries have pierc'd the cloud,
He sees, He sees their wrong [b];

He is come down to break their chain;
Though never more on Sion's fane
His visible ensign wave;
'Tis Sion, wheresoe'er they dwell,
Who, with His own true Israel,
Shall own Him strong to save.

He shall redeem them one by one,
Where'er the world-encircling sun
Shall see them meekly kneel:
All that He asks on Israel's part,
Is only, that the captive heart
Its woe and burthen feel.

[b] Exod. iii. 7, 8.

Gentiles! with fix'd yet awful eye
Turn ye this page of mystery,
Nor slight the warning sound:
"Put off thy shoes from off thy feet—
"The place where man his God shall meet,
"Be sure, is holy ground."

XXX.

PALM SUNDAY.

And He answered and said unto them, I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.
St. Luke xix. 40.

YE whose hearts are beating high
With the pulse of Poesy,
Heirs of more than royal race,
Fram'd by Heaven's peculiar grace,
God's own work to do on earth,
(If the word be not too bold,)
Giving virtue a new birth,
And a life that ne'er grows old—

Sovereign masters of all hearts!
Know ye, who hath set your parts?
He who gave you breath to sing,
By whose strength ye sweep the string,

He hath chosen you, to lead
His Hosannas here below;—
Mount, and claim your glorious meed;
Linger not with sin and woe.

But if ye should hold your peace,
Deem not that the song would cease—
Angels round his glory-throne,
Stars, His guiding hand that own,
Flowers, that grow beneath our feet,
Stones in earth's dark womb that rest,
High and low in choir shall meet,
Ere His Name shall be unblest.

Lord, by every minstrel tongue
Be thy praise so duly sung,
That thine angels' harps may ne'er
Fail to find fit echoing here:
We the while, of meaner birth,
Who in that divinest spell
Dare not hope to join on earth,
Give us grace to listen well.

But should thankless silence seal
Lips, that might half Heaven reveal,

Should bards in idol-hymns profane
The sacred soul-enthralling strain,
(As in this bad world below
Noblest things find vilest using,)
Then, thy power and mercy shew,
In vile things noble breath infusing;

Then waken into sound divine
The very pavement of thy shrine,
Till we, like Heaven's star-sprinkled floor,
Faintly give back what we adore.
Childlike though the voices be,
And untunable the parts,
Thou wilt own the minstrelsy,
If it flow from childlike hearts.

XXXI.

MONDAY BEFORE EASTER.

Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not. *Isaiah* lxiii. 16.

"FATHER to me Thou art and Mother dear,
"And Brother too, kind husband of my heart"—
So speaks Andromache[c] in boding fear,
Ere from her last embrace her hero part—
So evermore, by Faith's undying glow,
We own the Crucified in weal or woe.

Strange to our ears the church-bells of our home,
The fragrance of our old paternal fields
May be forgotten; and the time may come
When the babe's kiss no sense of pleasure yields
Even to the doting mother: but thine own
Thou never canst forget nor leave alone.

[c] Iliad. vi. 429.

There are who sigh that no fond heart is theirs,
None loves them best—O vain and selfish sigh!
Out of the bosom of His love He spares—
The Father spares the Son, for thee to die:
For thee He died—for thee He lives again:
He watches o'er thee in His boundless reign.

Thou art as much His care, as if beside
Nor man nor angel liv'd in heav'n or earth;
Thus sunbeams pour alike their glorious tide
To light up worlds, or wake an insect's mirth:
They shine and shine with unexhausted store—
Thou art thy Saviour's darling—seek no more.

On thee and thine, thy warfare and thine end,
Even in His hour of agony He thought,
When, ere the final pang His soul should rend,
The ransom'd spirits one by one were brought
To his mind's eye—two silent nights and days[d]
In calmness for His far-seen hour He stays.

Ye vaulted cells where martyr'd seers of old
Far in the rocky walls of Sion sleep,

[d] Monday and Tuesday in Passion week: on which days Scripture seems to be nearly silent concerning our Saviour's proceedings.

Green terraces and arched fountains cold,
Where lies the cypress shade so still and deep,
Dear sacred haunts of glory and of woe,
Help us, one hour, to trace his musings high and low:

One heart-ennobling hour! It may not be.
Th' unearthly thoughts have pass'd from earth away,
And fast as evening sunbeams from the sea
Thy footsteps all in Sion's deep decay
Were blotted from the holy ground: yet dear
Is every stone of hers; for Thou wast surely here.

There is a spot within this sacred dale
That felt Thee kneeling—touch'd thy prostrate brow
One angel knows it. O might prayer avail
To win that knowledge! sure each holy vow
Less quickly from th' unstable soul would fade,
Offer'd where CHRIST in agony was laid.

Might tear of ours once mingle with the blood
That from his aching brow by moonlight fell,
Over the mournful joy our thoughts would brood,
Till they had fram'd within a guardian spell
To chase repining fancies, as they rise,
Like birds of evil wing, to mar our sacrifice.

So dreams the heart self-flattering, fondly dreams;—
Else wherefore, when the bitter waves o'erflow,
Miss we the light, Gethsemane, that streams
From thy dear name, where in his page of woe
It shines, a pale kind star in winter's sky?
Who vainly reads it there, in vain had seen Him die.

XXXII.

TUESDAY BEFORE EASTER.

They gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not. *St. Mark* xv. 23.

'FILL high the bowl, and spice it well, and pour
" The dews oblivious: for the Cross is sharp,
" The Cross is sharp, and He
" Is tenderer than a lamb.

" He wept by Lazarus' grave—how will He bear
" This bed of anguish? and his pale weak form
" Is worn with many a watch
" Of sorrow and unrest.

" His sweat last night was as great drops of blood,
" And the sad burthen press'd him so to earth,
" The very torturers paus'd
" To help Him on His way.

"Fill high the bowl, benumb His aching sense
"With medicin'd sleep."—O awful in thy woe!
The parching thirst of death
Is on thee, and thou triest

The slumbrous potion bland, and wilt not drink:
Not sullen, nor in scorn, like haughty man
With suicidal hand
Putting his solace by:

But as at first thine all-pervading look
Saw from thy Father's bosom to th' abyss,
Measuring in calm presage
The infinite descent;

So to the end, though now of mortal pangs
Made heir, and emptied of thy glory' awhile,
With unaverted eye
Thou meetest all the storm.

Thou wilt feel all, that Thou may'st pity all;
And rather wouldst Thou wrestle with strong pain,
Than overcloud thy soul,
So clear in agony,

Or lose one glimpse of Heaven before the time.
O most entire and perfect sacrifice,
Renew'd in every pulse
That on the tedious Cross

Told the long hours of death, as, one by one,
The life-strings of that tender heart gave way;
Even sinners, taught by Thee,
Look Sorrow in the face,

And bid her freely welcome, unbeguil'd
By false kind solaces, and spells of earth:—
And yet not all unsooth'd;
For when was Joy so dear,

As the deep calm that breath'd, "*Father, forgive,*"
Or, "*Be with me in Paradise to-day?*"
And, though the strife be sore,
Yet in His parting breath

Love masters agony; the soul that seem'd
Forsaken, feels her present God again,
And in her Father's arms
Contented dies away.

XXXIII.

WEDNESDAY BEFORE EASTER.

Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. *St. Luke* xxii. 42.

O LORD my God, do Thou thy holy will—
I will lie still—
I will not stir, lest I forsake thine arm,
And break the charm,
Which lulls me, clinging to my Father's breast,
In perfect rest.

Wild Fancy, peace! thou must not me beguile
With thy false smile:
I know thy fla'teries and thy cheating ways;
Be silent, Praise,
Blind guide with siren voice, and blinding all
That hear thy call.

Come, Self-devotion, high and pure,
Thoughts that in thankfulness endure,
Though dearest hopes are faithless found,
And dearest hearts are bursting round.
Come, Resignation, spirit meek,
And let me kiss thy placid cheek,
And read in thy pale eye serene
Their blessing, who by faith can wean
Their hearts from sense, and learn to love
God only, and the joys above.

They say, who know the life divine,
And upward gaze with eagle eyne,
That by each golden crown on high [e],
Rich with celestial jewelry,
Which for our Lord's redeem'd is set,
There hangs a radiant coronet,
All gemm'd with pure and living light,
Too dazzling for a sinner's sight,

[e] . . . . that little coronet or special reward which God hath prepared (extraordinary and besides the great Crown of all faithful souls) for those "who have not defiled themselves with women, but follow the (virgin) Lamb for ever." *Bp. Taylor, Holy Living*, c. xi. sect. 3. p. 67.

Prepar'd for virgin souls, and them
Who seek the martyr's diadem.

Nor deem, who to that bliss aspire,
Must win their way through blood and fire.
The writhings of a wounded heart
Are fiercer than a foeman's dart.
Oft in Life's stillest shade reclining,
In Desolation unrepining,
Without a hope on earth to find
A mirror in an answering mind,
Meek souls there are, who little dream
Their daily strife an Angel's theme,
Or that the rod they take so calm
Shall prove in Heaven a martyr's palm.

And there are souls that seem to dwell
Above this earth—so rich a spell
Floats round their steps, where'er they move,
From hopes fulfill'd and mutual love.
Such, if on high their thoughts are set,
Nor in the stream the source forget,
If prompt to quit the bliss they know,
Following the Lamb where'er he go,

By purest pleasures unbeguil'd
To idolize or wife or child;
Such wedded souls our God shall own
For faultless virgins round his throne.

Thus every where we find our suffering God,
And where He trod
May set our steps: the Cross on Calvary
Uplifted high
Beams on the martyr host, a beacon light
In open fight.

To the still wrestlings of the lonely heart
He doth impart
The virtue of His midnight agony,
When none was nigh,
Save God and one good angel, to assuage
The tempest's rage.

Mortal! if life smile on thee, and thou find
All to thy mind,
Think, who did once from Heaven to Hell descend
Thee to befriend;
So shalt thou dare forego, at His dear call,
Thy best, thine all.

"O Father! not my will, but thine be done"—
So spake the Son.
Be this our charm, mellowing Earth's ruder noise
Of griefs and joys;
That we may cling for ever to thy breast
In perfect rest!

XXXIV.

THURSDAY BEFORE EASTER.

At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee, for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

Daniel ix. 23.

"O HOLY mountain of my God,
"How do thy towers in ruin lie,
"How art thou riven and strewn abroad,
"Under the rude and wasteful sky!"
'Twas thus upon his fasting-day
The "Man of Loves" was fain to pray,
His lattice open[f] toward the western breeze,
Mourning the home that still his yearning fancy sees.

Oh for a love like Daniel's now,
To wing to Heaven but one strong prayer

[f] Daniel vi. 10.

For GOD's new Israel, sunk as low,
Yet flourishing to sight as fair,
As Sion in her height of pride,
With queens for handmaids at her side,
With kings her nursing-fathers, throned high,
And compass'd with the world's too tempting blazonry.

'Tis true, nor winter stays thy growth,
Nor torrid summer's sickly smile;
The flashing billows of the south
Break not upon so lone an isle,
But thou, rich vine, art grafted there,
The fruit of death or life to bear,
Yielding a surer witness every day,
To thine Almighty Author and his stedfast sway.

Oh grief to think, that grapes of gall
Should cluster round thine healthiest shoot
God's herald prove a heartless thrall,
Who, if he dar'd, would fain be mute!
Even such is this bad world we see,
Which, self-condemn'd in owning Thee,
Yet dares not open farewell of Thee take,
For very pride, and her high-boasted Reason's sake.

What do we then? if far and wide
Men kneel to CHRIST, the pure and meek,
Yet rage with passion, swell with pride,
Have we not still our faith to seek?
Nay—but in stedfast humbleness
Kneel on to Him, who loves to bless
The prayer that waits for Him; and trembling strive
To keep the lingering flame in thine own breast alive.

Dark frown'd the future even on him,
The loving and beloved Seer,
What time he saw, through shadows dim,
The boundary of th' eternal year;
He only of the sons of men
Nam'd to be heir of glory then [g].
Else had it bruis'd too sore his tender heart
To see GOD'S ransom'd world in wrath and flame depart.

Then look no more: or closer watch
Thy course in Earth's bewildering ways,
For every glimpse thine eye can catch
Of what shall be in those dread days:

[g] Dan. xii. 13. See Bp. Kenn's Sermon on the character of Daniel.

So when th' Archangel's word is spoken,
And Death's deep trance for ever broken,
In mercy thou may'st feel the heavenly hand,
And in thy lot unharm'd before thy Saviour stand [h].

[h] Dan. xii. 13. "Thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

XXXV.

GOOD FRIDAY.

He is despised and rejected of men. *Isaiah* liii. 3.

IS it not strange, the darkest hour
That ever dawn'd on sinful earth
Should touch the heart with softer power
For comfort, than an angel's mirth?
That to the Cross the mourner's eye should turn
Sooner than where the stars of Christmas burn?

Sooner than where the Easter sun
Shines glorious on yon open grave,
And to and fro the tidings run,
"Who died to heal, is ris'n to save."
Sooner than where upon the Saviour's friends
The very Comforter in light and love descends.

Yet so it is: for duly there
The bitter herbs of earth are set,
Till temper'd by the Saviour's prayer,
And with the Saviour's life-blood wet,
They turn to sweetness, and drop holy balm,
Soft as imprison'd martyr's deathbed calm.

All turn to sweet—but most of all
That bitterest to the lip of pride,
When hopes presumptuous fade and fall,
Or Friendship scorns us, duly tried,
Or Love, the flower that closes up for fear
When rude and selfish spirits breathe too near.

Then like a long-forgotten strain
Comes sweeping o'er the heart forlorn
What sunshine hours had taught in vain
Of JESUS suffering shame and scorn,
As in all lowly hearts he suffers still,
While we triumphant ride and have the world at will.

His pierced hands in vain would hide
His face from rude reproachful gaze,
His ears are open to abide
The wildest storm the tongue can raise,

He who with one rough word[1], some early day,
Their idol world and them shall sweep for aye away.'

But we by Fancy may assuage
  The festering sore by Fancy made,
Down in some lonely hermitage
  Like wounded pilgrims safely laid.
Where gentlest breezes whisper souls distress'd,
That Love yet lives, and Patience shall find rest.

O shame beyond the bitterest thought
  That evil spirit ever fram'd,
That sinners know what Jesus wrought,
  Yet feel their haughty hearts untam'd—
That souls in refuge, holding by the Cross,
Should wince and fret at this world's little loss.

Lord of my heart, by thy last cry,
  Let not thy blood on earth be spent—
Lo, at thy feet I fainting lie,
  Mine eyes upon thy wounds are bent,
Upon thy streaming wounds my weary eyes
Wait like the parched earth on April skies.

[1] Wisdom of Solomon xii. 9.

Wash me, and dry these bitter tears,
O let my heart no further roam,
'Tis thine by vows, and hopes, and fears,
Long since—O call thy wanderer home;
To that dear home, safe in thy wounded side,
Where only broken hearts their sin and shame may hide.

XXXVI.

EASTER EVE.

As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water. *Zech.* xi. 11.

AT length the worst is o'er, and Thou art laid
Deep in thy darksome bed;
All still and cold beneath yon dreary stone
Thy sacred form is gone;
Around those lips where power and mercy hung,
The dews of death have clung;
The dull earth o'er Thee, and thy foes around,
Thou sleep'st a silent corse, in funeral fetters wound.

Sleep'st Thou indeed? or is thy spirit fled,
At large among the dead?
Whether in Eden bowers thy welcome voice
Wake Abraham to rejoice,

Or in some drearier scene thine eye controuls
The throngings band of souls;
That, as thy blood won earth, thine agony
Might set the shadowy realm from sin and sorrow free.

Where'er Thou roam'st, one happy soul, we know,
Seen at thy side in woe[k],
Waits on thy triumph—even as all the blest
With him and thee shall rest.
Each on his cross, by Thee we hang a while,
Watching thy patient smile,
Till we have learn'd to say, "'Tis justly done,
"Only in glory, LORD, thy sinful servant own."

Soon wilt Thou take us to thy tranquil bower
To rest one little hour,
Till thine elect are number'd, and the grave
Call Thee to come and save:
Then on thy bosom borne shall we descend,
Again with earth to blend,
Earth all refin'd with bright supernal fires,
Tinctur'd with holy blood, and wing'd with pure desires.

[k] St. Luke xxiii. 43.

Meanwhile with every son and saint of thine
Along the glorious line,
Sitting by turns beneath thy sacred feet
We'll hold communion sweet,
Know them by look and voice, and thank them all
For helping us in thrall,
For words of hope, and bright examples given
To shew through moonless skies that there is light in Heaven.

O come that day, when in this restless heart
Earth shall resign her part,
When in the grave with Thee my limbs shall rest,
My soul with Thee be blest!
But stay, presumptuous—CHRIST with thee abides
In the rock's dreary sides:
He from the stone will wring celestial dew
If but the prisoner's heart be faithful found and true.

When tears are spent, and Thou art left alone
With ghosts of blessings gone,
Think thou art taken from the cross, and laid
In JESUS' burial shade;
Take Moses' rod, the rod of prayer, and call
Out of the rocky wall

The fount of holy blood; and lift on high
Thy grovelling soul that feels so desolate and dry.

Prisoner of Hope thou art[l]—look up and sing
In hope of promis'd spring.
As in the pit his father's darling lay[m]
Beside the desert way,
And knew not how, but knew his GOD would save
Even from that living grave,
So, buried with our LORD, we'll close our eyes
To the decaying world, till Angels bid us rise.

[l] Zechariah ix. 12. Turn ye to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope.

[m] Gen. xxxvii. 24. They took him and cast him into a pit, and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.

XXXVII.

EASTER DAY.

And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen. *St. Luke* xxiv. 5, 6.

OH! day of days! shall hearts set free
No "minstrel rapture" find for Thee?
Thou art the Sun of other days,
They shine by giving back thy rays:

Enthroned in thy sovereign sphere
Thou shedd'st thy light on all the year:
Sundays by Thee more glorious break,
An Easter Day in every week:

And week-days, following in their train,
The fullness of thy blessing gain,
Till all, both resting and employ
Be one Lord's day of holy joy.

Then wake, my soul, to high desires,
And earlier light thine altar fires:
The World some hours is on her way,
Nor thinks on thee, thou blessed day:

Or, if she think, it is in scorn:
The vernal light of Easter morn
To her dark gaze no brighter seems
Than Reason's or the Law's pale beams.

"Where is your Lord?" she scornful asks:
"Where is his hire? we know his tasks;
"Sons of a king ye boast to be;
"Let us your crowns and treasures see."

We in the words of Truth reply,
(An angel brought them from the sky,)
"Our crown, our treasure is not here,
"'Tis stored above the highest sphere:

"Methinks your wisdom guides amiss,
"To seek on earth a Christian's bliss;
"We watch not now the lifeless stone;
"Our only Lord is risen and gone."

Yet even the lifeless stone is dear
For thoughts of Him who late lay here;
And the base world, now Christ hath died,
Ennobled is and glorified.

No more a charnel-house, to fence
The relics of lost innocence,
A vault of ruin and decay;—
Th' imprisoning stone is roll'd away:

'Tis now a cell, where angels use
To come and go with heavenly news,
And in the ears of mourners say,
"Come, see the place where Jesus lay:"

'Tis now a fane, where Love can find
Christ every where embalm'd and shrin'd;
Aye gathering up memorials sweet,
Where'er she sets her duteous feet.

Oh! joy to Mary first allow'd,
When rous'd from weeping o'e his shroud,
By his own calm, soul-soothing tone,
Breathing her name, as still his own!

Joy to the faithful Three renew'd,
As their glad errand they pursued!
Happy, who so Christ's word convey,
That he may meet them on their way!

So is it still! to holy tears,
In lonely hours, Christ risen appears:
In social hours, who Christ would see,
Must turn all tasks to Charity.

XXXVIII.

MONDAY IN EASTER WEEK.

[1] Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him. *Acts* x. 34, 35.

GO up and watch the new-born rill
Just trickling from its mossy bed,
Streaking the heath-clad hill
With a bright emerald thread.

Canst thou her bold career foretel,
What rocks she shall o'erleap or rend,
How far in Ocean's swell
Her freshening billows send?

Perchance that little brook shall flow
The bulwark of some mighty realm,
Bear navies to and fro
With monarchs at their helm.

Or canst thou guess, how far away
Some sister nymph, beside her urn
Reclining night and day,
Mid reeds and mountain fern,

Nurses her store, with thine to blend
When many a moor and glen are past,
Then in the wide sea end
Their spotless lives at last?

Even so, the course of prayer who knows?
It springs in silence where it will,
Springs out of sight, and flows
At first a lonely rill:

But streams shall meet it by and by
From thousand sympathetic hearts,
Together swelling high
Their chant of many parts.

Unheard by all but angel ears
The good Cornelius knelt alone,
Nor dream'd his prayers and tears
Would help a world undone.

The while upon his terrac'd roof
The lov'd Apostle to his Lord
In silent thought aloof
For heavenly vision soar'd.

Far o'er the glowing western main
His wistful brow was upward rais'd,
Where, like an angel's train,
The burnish'd water blaz'd.

The saint beside the ocean pray'd,
The soldier in his chosen bower,
Where all his eye survey'd
Seem'd sacred in that hour.

To each unknown his brother's prayer,
Yet brethren true in dearest love
Were they—and now they share
Fraternal joys above.

There daily through Christ's open gate
They see the Gentile spirits press,
Brightening their high estate
With dearer happiness.

What civic wreath for comrades sav'd
Shone ever with such deathless gleam,
Or when did perils brav'd
So sweet to veterans seem?

XXXIX.

TUESDAY IN EASTER WEEK.

And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, and did run to bring His disciples word. *St. Matthew* xxviii. 8.

TO THE SNOW-DROP.

THOU first-born of the year's delight,
Pride of the dewy glade,
In vernal green and virgin white,
Thy vestal robes, array'd;

'Tis not because thy drooping form
Sinks graceful on its nest,
When chilly shades from gathering storm
Affright thy tender breast;

Nor for yon river islet wild
Beneath the willow spray,
Where, like the ringlets of a child,
Thou weav'st thy circle gay;

'Tis not for these I love thee dear—
Thy shy averted smiles
To Fancy bode a joyous year,
One of Life's fairy isles.

They twinkle to the wintry moon,
And cheer th' ungenial day,
And tell us, all will glisten soon
As green and bright as they.

Is there a heart, that loves the spring,
Their witness can refuse?
Yet mortals doubt, when angels bring
From Heaven their Easter news:

When holy maids and matrons speak
Of Christ's forsaken bed,
And voices, that forbid to seek
The living mid the dead,

And when they say, "Turn wandering heart,
"Thy Lord is ris'n indeed,
"Let Pleasure go, put Care apart,
"And to His presence speed;"

We smile in scorn : and yet we know
They early sought the tomb,
Their hearts, that now so freshly glow,
Lost in desponding gloom.

They who have sought, nor hope to find,
Wear not so bright a glance:
They who have won their earthly mind
Less reverently advance.

But where, in gentle spirits, fear
And joy so duly meet,
These sure have seen the angels near,
And kiss'd the Saviour's feet.

Nor let the Pastor's thankful eye
Their faltering tale disdain,
As on their lowly couch they lie,
Prisoners of want and pain.

O guide us, when our faithless hearts
From Thee would start aloof,
Where Patience her sweet skill imparts
Beneath some cottage roof:

Revive our dying fires, to burn
High as her anthems soar,
And of our scholars let us learn
Our own forgotten lore.

XL.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself? *Numbers* xvi. 9.

FIRST Father of the holy seed,
If yet, invok'd in hour of need,
Thou count me for thine own,
Not quite an outcast if I prove,
(Thou joy'st in miracles of love)
Hear, from thy mercy-throne!

Upon thine altar's horn of gold
Help me to lay my trembling hold,
Though stain'd with Christian gore;—
The blood of souls by Thee redeem'd,
But, while I rov'd or idly dream'd,
Lost to be found no more.

For oft, when summer leaves were bright,
And every flower was bath'd in light,
In sunshine moments past,
My wilful heart would burst away
From where the holy shadow lay,
Where Heaven my lot had cast.

I thought it scorn with Thee to dwell,
A Hermit in a silent cell,
While, gaily sweeping by,
Wild Fancy blew his bugle strain,
And marshall'd all his gallant train
In the world's wondering eye.

I would have join'd him—but as oft
Thy whisper'd warnings, kind and soft,
My better soul confess'd.
"My servant, let the world alone—
"Safe on the steps of Jesus' throne
"Be tranquil and be blest.

"Seems it to thee a niggard hand
"That nearest Heaven has bade thee stand,
"The ark to touch and bear,

"With incense of pure heart's desire
"To heap the censer's sacred fire,
"The snow-white Ephod wear?"

Why should we crave the worldling's wreath,
On whom the Saviour deign'd to breathe,
To whom his keys were given,
Who lead the choir where angels meet,
With angels' food our brethren greet,
And pour the drink of Heaven?

When sorrow all our heart would ask,
We need not shun our daily task,
And hide ourselves for calm;
The herbs we seek to heal our woe
Familiar by our pathway grow,
Our common air is balm.

Around each pure domestic shrine
Bright flowers of Eden bloom and twine,
Our hearths are altars all;
The prayers of hungry souls and poor,
Like armed angels at the door,
Our unseen foes appal.

Alms all around and hymns within—
What evil eye can entrance win
  Where guards like these abound?
If chance some heedless heart should roam,
Sure, thought of these will lure it home
  Ere lost in Folly's round.

O joys, that sweetest in decay,
Fall not, like wither'd leaves, away,
  But with the silent breath
Of violets drooping one by one,
Soon as their fragrant task is done,
  Are wafted high in death!

XLI.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most High; which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall arise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. *Numbers* xxiv. 16, 17.

O FOR a sculptor's hand,
That thou might'st take thy stand,
Thy wild hair floating on the eastern breeze,
Thy tranc'd yet open gaze
Fix'd on the desert haze,
As one who deep in heaven some airy pageant sees.

In outline dim and vast
Their fearful shadows cast
The giant forms of empires on their way
To ruin: one by one
They tower and they are gone,
Yet in the Prophet's soul the dreams of avarice stay.

No sun or star so bright
In all the world of light
That they should draw to heaven his downward eye,
He hears th' Almighty's word,
He sees the angel's sword,
Yet low upon the earth his heart and treasure lie.

Lo from yon argent field,
To him and us reveal'd
One gentle star glides down, on earth to dwell.
Chain'd as they are below
Our eyes may see it glow,
And as it mounts again, may track its brightness well.

To him it glar'd afar,
A token of wild war,
The banner of his Lord's victorious wrath :
But close to us it gleams,
Its soothing lustre streams
Around our home's green walls, and on our church-way path.

We in the tents abide
Which he at distance eyed

Like goodly cedars by the waters spread,
While seven red altar-fires
Rose up in wavy spires,
Where on the mount he watch'd his sorceries dark and dread.

He watch'd till morning's ray
On lake and meadow lay,
And willow-shaded streams, that silent sweep
Around the banner'd lines,
Where by their several signs
The desert-wearied tribes in sight of Canaan sleep.

He watch'd till knowledge came
Upon his soul like flame,
Not of those magic fires at random caught:
But true prophetic light
Flash'd o'er him, high and bright,
Flash'd once, and died away, and left his darken'd thought.

And can he choose but fear,
Who feels his GOD so near,
That when he fain would curse, his powerless tongue

In blessing only moves?—
Alas! the world he loves
Too close around his heart her tangling veil hath flung.

Sceptre and Star divine,
Who in thine inmost shrine
Hast made us worshippers, O claim thine own;
More than thy seers we know—
O teach our love to grow
Up to thy heavenly light, and reap what Thou hast sown.

XLII.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but when she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

St. John xvi. 21.

WELL may I guess and feel
Why Autumn should be sad;
But vernal airs should sorrow heal,
Spring should be gay and glad:
Yet as along this violet bank I rove,
The languid sweetness seems to choke my breath,
I sit me down beside the hazel grove,
And sigh, and half could wish my weariness were death.

Like a bright veering cloud
Grey blossoms twinkle there,
Warbles around a busy crowd
Of larks in purest air.

Shame on the heart that dreams of blessings gone,
Or wakes the spectral forms of woe and crime,
When nature sings of joy and hope alone,
Reading her cheerful lesson in her own sweet time.

Nor let the proud heart say,
In her self-torturing hour,
The travail pangs must have their way,
The aching brow must lower.
To us long since the glorious Child is born,
Our throes should be forgot, or only seem
Like a sad vision told for joy at morn,
For joy that we have wak'd and found it but a dream.

Mysterious to all thought
A mother's prime of bliss,
When to her eager lips is brought
Her infant's thrilling kiss.
O never shall it set, the sacred light
Which dawns that moment on her tender gaze,
In the eternal distance blending bright
Her darling's hope and hers, for love and joy and praise.

No need for her to weep
Like Thracian wives of yore,

Save when in rapture still and deep
Her thankful heart runs o'er.
They mourn'd to trust their treasure on the main,
Sure of the storm, unknowing of their guide:
Welcome to her the peril and the pain,
For well she knows the home where they may safely hide.

She joys that one is born
Into a world forgiven,
Her Father's household to adorn,
And dwell with her in heaven.
So have I seen, in spring's bewitching hour,
When the glad earth is offering all her best,
Some gentle maid bend o'er a cherish'd flower,
And wish it worthier on a Parent's heart to rest.

XLIII.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send him unto you. *St. John* xvi. 7.

MY Saviour, can it ever be
That I should gain by losing Thee?
The watchful mother tarries nigh
Though sleep have clos'd her infant's eye,
For should he wake, and find her gone,
She knows she could not bear his moan.
But I am weaker than a child,
And Thou art more than mother dear;
Without Thee Heaven were but a wild:
How can I live without Thee here?

"'Tis good for you, that I should go,
"You lingering yet awhile below;"—

'Tis thine own gracious promise, Lord!
Thy saints have prov'd the faithful word,
When Heaven's bright boundless avenue
Far open'd on their eager view,
And homeward to thy Father's throne,
  Still lessening, brightening on their sight,
Thy shadowy car went soaring on;
  They track'd Thee up th' abyss of light.

Thou bidst rejoice; they dare not mourn,
But to their home in gladness turn,
Their home and God's, that favour'd place,
Where still he shines on Abraham's race,
In prayers and blessings there to wait
Like suppliants at their monarch's gate,
Who bent with bounty rare to aid
  The splendours of his crowning day,
Keeps back awhile his largess, made
  More welcome for that brief delay:

In doubt they wait, but not unblest;
They doubt not of their Master's rest,
Nor of the gracious will of Heaven—
Who gave his Son, sure all has given—

But in ecstatic awe they muse
What course the genial stream may choose,
And far and wide their fancies rove,
  And to their height of wonder strain,
What secret miracle of love
  Should make their Saviour's going gain.

The days of hope and prayer are past,
The day of comfort dawns at last,
The everlasting gates again
Roll back, and lo! a royal train—
From the far depth of light once more
The floods of glory earth-ward pour:
They part like shower-drops in mid air,
  But ne'er so soft fell noon-tide shower,
Nor evening rain-bow gleam'd so fair
  To weary swains in parched bower.

Swiftly and straight each tongue of flame
Through cloud and breeze unwavering came,
And darted to its place of rest
On some meek brow of Jesus blest.
Nor fades it yet, that living gleam,
And still those lambent lightnings stream

Where'er the Lord is, there are they ;
In every heart that gives them room,
They light His altar every day,
Zeal to inflame, and vice consume.

Soft as the plumes of Jesus' Dove
They nurse the soul to heavenly love :
The struggling spark of good within,
Just smother'd in the strife of sin,
They quicken to a timely glow,
The pure flame spreading high and low.
Said I, that prayer and hope were o'er?
Nay, blessed Spirit! but by Thee
The Church's prayer finds wings to soar,
The Church's hope finds eyes to see.

Then, fainting soul, arise and sing;
Mount, but be sober on the wing;
Mount up, for Heaven is won by prayer,
Be sober, for thou art not there;
Till death the weary spirit free,
Thy God hath said, 'Tis good for thee
To walk by faith and not by sight :
Take it on trust a little while;

Soon shalt thou read the mystery right
In the full sunshine of His smile.

Or if thou yet more knowledge crave,
Ask thine own heart, that willing slave
To all that works thee woe or harm?
Shouldst thou not need some mighty charm
To win thee to thy Saviour's side,
Though he had deign'd with thee to bide?
The Spirit must stir the darkling deep,
The Dove must settle on the Cross,
Else we should all sin on or sleep
With Christ in sight, turning our gain to loss.

XLIV.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

ROGATION SUNDAY.

And the Lord was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time. *Deut.* ix. 20.

NOW is there solemn pause in earth and heaven;
The Conqueror now
His bonds hath riven,
And Angels wonder why he stays below:
Yet hath not man his lesson learn'd,
How endless love should be return'd.

Deep is the silence as of summer noon,
When a soft shower
Will trickle soon,
A gracious rain, freshening the weary bower—
O sweetly then far off is heard
The clear note of some lonely bird.

So let thy turtle dove's sad call arise
In doubt and fear
Through darkening skies,
And pierce, O LORD, thy justly sealed ear,
Where on the house top[a], all night long,
She trills her widow'd, faltering song.

Teach her to know and love her hour of prayer,
And evermore,
As faith grows rare,
Unlock her heart, and offer all its store
In holier love and humbler vows,
As suits a lost returning spouse.

Not as at first[b], but with intenser cry,
Upon the mount
She now must lie,
Till thy dear love to blot the sad account
Of her rebellious race be won,
Pitying the mother in the son.

[a] Psalm cii. 7.

[b] Deut. ix. 25. I fell down before the Lord forty days and forty nights, as I fell down at the first.

But chiefly (for she knows thee anger'd worst
By holiest things
Profan'd and curst)
Chiefly for Aaron's seed she spreads her wings,
If but one leaf she may from Thee
Win of the reconciling tree.

For what shall heal, when holy water banes?
Or who may guide
O'er desert plains
Thy lov'd yet sinful people wandering wide,
If Aaron's hand unshrinking mould [c]
An idol form of earthly gold?

Therefore her tears are bitter, and as deep
Her boding sigh,
As, while men sleep,
Sad hearted mothers heave, that wakeful lie,
To muse upon some darling child
Roaming in youth's uncertain wild.

Therefore on fearful dreams her inward sight
Is fain to dwell—
What lurid light

[c] Exodus xxxii. 4.

Shall the last darkness of the world dispel,
The Mediator in his wrath
Descending down the lightning's path.

Yet, yet awhile, offended Saviour, pause,
In act to break [d]
Thine outrag'd laws,
O spare thy rebels for thine own dear sake;
Withdraw thine hand, nor dash to earth
The covenant of our second birth.

'Tis forfeit like the first—we own it all—
Yet for love's sake,
Let it not fall;
But at thy touch let veiled hearts awake,
That nearest to thine altar lie,
Yet least of holy things descry.

Teacher of teachers! Priest of priests! from Thee
The sweet strong prayer
Must rise, to free
First Levi, then all Israel, from the snare.
Thou art our Moses out of sight—
Speak for us, or we perish quite.

[d] Exodus xxxii. 19.

XLV.

ASCENSION DAY.

Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into Heaven. *Acts* i. 11.

SOFT cloud, that while the breeze of May
Chants her glad matins in the leafy arch,
Draw'st thy bright veil across the heavenly way,
Meet pavement for an angel's glorious march:

My soul is envious of mine eye,
That it should soar and glide with thee so fast,
The while my groveling thoughts half buried lie,
Or lawless roam around this earthly waste.

Chains of my heart, avaunt I say—
I will arise, and in the strength of love
Pursue the bright track ere it fade away,
My Saviour's pathway to his home above.

Sure, when I reach the point where earth
Melts into nothing from th' uncumber'd sight,
Heaven will o'ercome th' attraction of my birth,
And I shall sink in yonder sea of light:

Till resting by th' incarnate LORD,
Once bleeding, now triumphant for my sake,
I mark him, how by seraph hosts ador'd
He to earth's lowest cares is still awake.

The sun and every vassal star,
All space, beyond the soar of Angel wings,
Wait on His word: and yet he stays his ear
For every sigh a contrite suppliant brings.

He listens to the silent tear
For all the anthems of the boundless sky—
And shall our dreams of music bar our ear
To His soul-piercing voice for ever nigh?

Nay, gracious Saviour—but as now
Our thoughts have trac'd thee to thy glory-throne,
So help us evermore with thee to bow
Where human sorrow breathes her lowly moan.

We must not stand to gaze too long,
Though on unfolding Heaven our gaze we bend,
Where lost behind the bright angelic throng
We see CHRIST's entering triumph slow ascend.

No fear but we shall soon behold,
Faster than now it fades, that gleam revive,
When issuing from his cloud of fiery gold
Our wasted frames feel the true sun, and live.

Then shall we see Thee as Thou art,
For ever fix'd in no unfruitful gaze,
But such as lifts the new-created heart,
Age after age, in worthier love and praise.

XLVI.

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION.

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.
1 *St. Peter* iv. 10.

THE Earth that in her genial breast
Makes for the down a kindly nest,
Where wafted by the warm south-west
It floats at pleasure,
Yields, thankful, of her very best,
To nurse her treasure:

True to her trust, tree, herb, or reed,
She renders for each scatter'd seed,
And to her Lord with duteous heed
Gives large increase:
Thus year by year she works unfeed,
And will not cease.

Woe worth these barren hearts of ours,
Where Thou hast set celestial flowers,
And water'd with more balmy showers,
Than e'er distill'd
In Eden, on th' ambrosial bowers—
Yet nought we yield.

Largely Thou givest, gracious Lord,
Largely thy gifts should be restor'd;
Freely Thou givest, and thy word
Is, "freely give[c]."
He only, who forgets to hoard,
Has learn'd to live.

Wisely Thou givest—all around
Thine equal rays are resting found,
Yet varying so on various ground
They pierce and strike,
That not two roseate cups are crown'd
With dew alike:

Even so, in silence, likest Thee,
Steals on soft-handed Charity,

[c] St. Matt. x. 8.

Tempering her gifts, that seem so free,
By time and place,
Till not a woe the bleak world see,
But finds her grace:

Eyes to the blind, and to the lame
Feet, and to sinners wholesome blame,
To starving bodies food and flame
By turns she brings,
To humbled souls, that sink for shame,
Lends heaven-ward wings:

Leads them the way our Saviour went,
And shews Love's treasure yet unspent;
As when th' unclouded heavens were rent
Opening his road,
Nor yet his Holy Spirit sent
To our abode.

Ten days th' eternal doors display'd
Were wondering (so th' Almighty bade)
Whom Love enthron'd would send, in aid
Of souls that mourn,

Left orphans in Earth's dreary shade
As soon as born.

Open they stand, that prayers in throngs
May rise on high, and holy songs,
Such incense as of right belongs
To the true shrine,
Where stands the Healer of all wrongs
In light divine;

The golden censer in his hand,
He offers hearts from every land,
Tied to his own by gentlest band
Of silent Love:
About Him winged blessings stand
In act to move.

A little while, and they shall fleet
From Heaven to Earth, attendants meet
On the life-giving Paraclete
Speeding his flight,
With all that sacred is and sweet,
On saints to light.

Apostles, Prophets, Pastors, all
Shall feel the shower of Mercy fall,
And starting at th' Almighty's call,
Give what He gave,
Till their high deeds the world appall,
And sinners save.

XLVII.

WHITSUNDAY.

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting: and there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. *Acts* ii. 2, 3.

WHEN God of old came down from Heaven,
In power and wrath he came;
Before his feet the clouds were riven,
Half darkness and half flame:

Around the trembling mountain's base
The prostrate people lay,
Convinc'd of sin, but not of grace;
It was a dreadful day.

But when He came the second time,
He came in power and love,
Softer than gale at morning prime
Hover'd his holy Dove.

The fires that rush'd on Sinai down
In sudden torrents dread,
Now gently light, a glorious crown,
On every sainted head.

Like arrows went those lightnings forth
Wing'd with the sinner's doom,
But these, like tongues, o'er all the earth
Proclaiming life to come:

And as on Israel's awe-struck ear
The voice exceeding loud,
The trump, that angels quake to hear,
Thrill'd from the deep, dark cloud,

So, when the Spirit of our God
Came down his flock to find,
A voice from heaven was heard abroad,
A rushing, mighty wind.

Nor doth the outward ear alone
At that high warning start;
Conscience gives back th' appalling tone;
'Tis echoed in the heart.

It fills the Church of God; it fills
The sinful world around;
Only in stubborn hearts and wills
No place for it is found.

To other strains our souls are set:
A giddy whirl of sin
Fills ear and brain, and will not let
Heaven's harmonies come in.

Come, Lord, come, Wisdom, Love, and Power,
Open our ears to hear;
Let us not miss th' accepted hour;
Save, Lord, by Love or Fear.

XLVIII.

MONDAY IN WHITSUN WEEK.

So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth : and they left off to build the city. *Genesis* xi. 8.

SINCE all that is not heav'n must fade,
Light be the hand of Ruin laid
Upon the home I love:
With lulling spell let soft Decay
Steal on, and spare the giant sway,
The crash of tower and grove.

Far opening down some woodland deep
In their own quiet glade should sleep
The relics dear to thought,
And wild-flower wreaths from side to side
Their waving tracery hang, to hide
What ruthless Time has wrought.

Such are the visions green and sweet
That o'er the wistful fancy fleet
In Asia's sea-like plain,
Where slowly, round his isles of sand,
Euphrates through the lonely land
Winds toward the pearly main.

Slumber is there, but not of rest;
There his forlorn and weary nest
The famish'd hawk has found,
The wild dog howls at fall of night,
The serpent's rustling coils affright
The traveller on his round.

What shapeless form, half lost on high[f],
Half seen against the evening sky,
Seems like a ghost to glide,
And watch, from Babel's crumbling heap,

[f] See Sir R. K. Porter's Travels, ii. 387. "In my second visit to Birs Nimrood, my party suddenly halted, having descried several dark objects moving along the summit of its hill, which they construed into dismounted Arabs on the look out: I took out my glass to examine, and soon distinguished that the causes of our alarm were two or three majestic lions, taking the air upon the heights of the pyramid."

Where in her shadow, fast asleep,
Lies fall'n imperial Pride?

With half-clos'd eye a lion there
Lies basking in his noontide lair,
Or prowls in twilight gloom.
The golden city's king he seems,
Such as in old prophetic dreams [g]
Sprang from rough ocean's womb.

But where are now his eagle wings,
That shelter'd erst a thousand kings,
Hiding the glorious sky
From half the nations, till they own
No holier name, no mightier throne?
That vision is gone by.

Quench'd is the golden statue's ray [h],
The breath of heaven has blown away
What toiling earth had pil'd,
Scattering wise heart and crafty hand,
As breezes strew on ocean's sand
The fabrics of a child.

[g] Daniel vii. 4. [h] Daniel ii. and iii.

Divided thence through every age
Thy rebels, Lord, their warfare wage,
And hoarse and jarring all
Mount up their heaven assailing cries
To thy bright watchmen in the skies
From Babel's shatter'd wall.

Thrice only since, with blended might
The nations on that haughty height
Have met to scale the heaven.
Thrice only might a Seraph's look
A moment's shade of sadness brook—
Such power to guilt was given.

Now the fierce Bear and Leopard keen[i]
Are perish'd as they ne'er had been,
Oblivion is their home:
Ambition's boldest dream and last
Must melt before the clarion blast
That sounds the dirge of Rome.

Heroes and Kings, obey the charm,
Withdraw the proud high-reaching arm,

[i] Daniel vii. 5, 6.

There is an oath on high,
That ne'er on brow of mortal birth
Shall blend again the crowns of earth,
Nor in according cry

Her many voices mingling own
One tyrant Lord, one idol throne:
But to His triumph soon
He shall descend, who rules above,
And the pure language of His love [k]
All tongues of men shall tune.

Nor let Ambition heartless mourn;
When Babel's very ruins burn,
Her high desires may breathe;—
O'ercome thyself, and thou may'st share
With Christ his Father's throne [l], and wear
The world's imperial wreath.

[k] Zephaniah iii. 9. "Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent."

[l] Revelations iii. 21. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne."

XLIX.

TUESDAY IN WHITSUN-WEEK.

When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them.
St. John x. 4.

(*Addressed to Candidates for Ordination.*)

"LORD, in thy field I work all day,
"I read, I teach, I warn, I pray,
"And yet these wilful wandering sheep
"Within thy fold I cannot keep.

"I journey, yet no step is won—
"Alas! the weary course I run!
"Like sailors shipwreck'd in their dreams,
"All powerless and benighted seems."

What? wearied out with half a life?
Scar'd with this smooth unbloody strife?
Think where thy coward hopes had flown
Had Heaven held out the martyr's crown.

How could'st thou hang upon the cross,
To whom a weary hour is loss?
Or how the thorns and scourging brook,
Who shrinkest from a scornful look?

Yet ere thy craven spirit faints,
Hear thine own King, the King of saints;
Though thou wert toiling in the grave,
'Tis He can cheer thee, He can save.

He is th' eternal mirror bright,
Where angels view the FATHER's light,
And yet in Him the simplest swain
May read his homely lesson plain.

Early to quit his home on earth,
And claim his high celestial birth,
Alone with his true Father found
Within the temple's solemn round:—

Yet in meek duty to abide
For many a year at Mary's side,
Nor heed, though restless spirits ask,
"What? hath the Christ forgot his task?"—

Conscious of Deity within,
To bow before an heir of sin,
With folded arms on humble breast,
By his own servant wash'd and blest:—

Then full of Heaven, the mystic Dove
Hovering his gracious brow above,
To shun the voice and eye of praise,
And in the wild his trophies raise:—

With hymns of angels in his ears,
Back to his task of woe and tears,
Unmurmuring through the world to roam
With not a wish or thought at home:—

All but himself to heal and save,
Till ripen'd for the cross and grave
He to His Father gently yield
The breath that our redemption seal'd:—

Then to unearthly life arise,
Yet not at once to seek the skies,
But glide awhile from saint to saint,
Lest on our lonely way we faint;

And through the cloud by glimpses shew
How bright, in Heaven, the marks will glow
Of the true cross, imprinted deep
Both on the Shepherd and the sheep:—

When out of sight, in heart and prayer
Thy chosen people still to bear,
And from behind thy glorious veil,
Shed light that cannot change or fail:—

This is thy pastoral course, O Lord,
Till we be sav'd, and Thou ador'd;—
Thy course and ours—but who are they
Who follow on the narrow way?

And yet of Thee from year to year
The Church's solemn chaunt we hear,
As from thy cradle to thy throne
She swells her high heart-cheering tone.

Listen, ye pure white-robed souls,
Whom in her list she now enrolls,
And gird ye for your high emprize
By these her thrilling minstrelsies.

And wheresoe'er, in earth's wide field,
Ye lift, for Him, the red-cross shield,
Be this your song, your joy and pride—
"Our Champion went before and died."

L.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe. if I tell you of heavenly things? *St. John* iii. 12.

CREATOR, Saviour, strengthening Guide,
Now on Thy mercy's ocean wide
Far out of sight we seem to glide.

Help us, each hour, with steadier eye
To search the deepening mystery,
The wonders of Thy sea and sky.

The blessed angels look and long
To praise Thee with a worthier song,
And yet our silence does Thee wrong.—

Along the Church's central space
The sacred weeks with unfelt pace
Have borne us on from grace to grace.

As travellers on some woodland height,
When wintry suns are gleaming bright,
Lose in arch'd glades their tangled sight;—

By glimpses such as dreamers love
Through her grey veil the leafless grove
Shews where the distant shadows rove;—

Such trembling joy the soul o'er-awes
As nearer to thy shrine she draws:—
And now before the choir we pause.

The door is clos'd—but soft and deep
Around the awful arches sweep
Such airs as soothe a hermit's sleep.

From each carv'd nook and fretted bend
Cornice and gallery seem to send
Tones that with seraph hymns might blend.

Three solemn parts together twine
In harmony's mysterious line;
Three solemn aisles approach the shrine:

Yet all are One—together all,
In thoughts that awe but not appal,
Teach the adoring heart to fall.

Within these walls each fluttering guest
Is gently lur'd to one safe nest—
Without, 'tis moaning and unrest.

The busy world a thousand ways
Is hurrying by, nor ever stays
To catch a note of Thy dear praise.

Why tarries not her chariot wheel,
That o'er her with no vain appeal
One gust of heavenly song might steal?

Alas! for her Thy opening flowers
Unheeded breathe to summer showers,
Unheard the music of Thy bowers.

What echoes from the sacred dome
The selfish spirit may o'er-come
That will not hear of love or home?

The heart that scorn'd a father's care,
How can it rise in filial prayer?
How an all-seeing Guardian bear?

Or how shall envious brethren own
A Brother on th' eternal throne,
Their Father's joy, their hope alone?

How shall thy Spirit's gracious wile
The sullen brow of gloom beguile,
That frowns on sweet affection's smile?

Eternal One, Almighty Trine!
(Since Thou art ours, and we are Thine)
By all thy love did once resign,

By all the grace thy heavens still hide,
We pray thee, keep us at thy side,
Creator, Saviour, strengthening Guide!

DATE DUE

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